VIII

ANNUAL REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE

Year 1884.

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REPORT ON LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM FOR THE YEAR 1884.

CHAPTER I.

WORKING OF THE INLAND EMIGRATION ACT, I. OF 1882.

Introductory.

THE Emigration Act has worked smoothly during the past year, and no further objections have been received to its provisions beyond those which were noticed in Chapter I. of last year's report, and to which it is unnecessary again to revert. In reviewing that report, the Government of India expressed its opinion that it did not show the existence at present of any urgent necessity to amend the Act either radically or in detail, the defects enumerated not being such as to interfere materially with the proper working of the Act. During the year 1884, and up to the date of submitting the present report, nothing has occurred to induce the officiating Chief Commissioner to move the Government of India to alter its opinion as thus expressed. From his separate Note on the working of the Act since its introduction, it will be seen that Mr. Elliott also was not prepared, when he left the province in February last, to press upon the Government of India the necessity of amending its provisions.

Transit of emigrants to the Assam Valley.

2. The daily mail service on the Brahmaputra river was running throughout the year 1884, and, so far as the transport of coolies it concerned, it has proved a complete success. Already the number of coolies sent by Dhubri, in preference to the Goalundo route, has increased to 90 per cent. of the total number imported, and it is probable that, before long shipping at Goalundo will cease, and all coolies will be sent through Dhubri. Of the 26,040 coolies who started from Dhubri, no less than 21,497 went by the daily mail steamers, the remainder being taken up by large steamers running singlehanded on occasions when the mail steamers were unable to carry off the large number of coolies that had accumulated in the depôts at Dhubri. In February 1884 the Chief Commissioner published an amended set of rules for the regulation of coolie accommodation on board steamers and flats, in which some special rules were introduced for the benefit of the mail steamers, which could not, on account of their smaller size, comply with all the requirements originally exacted by the Local Government. In November 1884 the Rivers Steam Navigation Company, finding that their steamers were not of sufficient size to carry off all the coolies that daily arrived at Dhubri, applied to the Local Government to reduce the space allotted to each coolie from 12 feet in the hot weather and 10 feet in the cold weather to 10 feet in the hot and 8 feet in the cold season. The Chief Commissioner was unable to accede to this request, but made an important concession to the Company in allowing them to include February and March in the definition of "cold" season, two busy recruiting months during which, before this, the Company had been bound to allow 12 feet per coolie on board their steamers. The average duration of the journey was 4 days and 21 hours from Dhubri to Dibrugarh, a great improvement on the 12½ days hitherto taken by the large steamers, and the result of the introduction of the service on the health of the coolie has been shown in the most satisfactory way by the reduction of the death-rate on the journey from ·62 per cent. in 1882 and ·71 per cent. in 1883 to ·26 per cent. in 1884.

Transit to the Surma Valley.

3. The passage of immigrants by country boats into Sylhet and Cachar has been attended with heavier mortality than has ever yet been known. Details will be found below (Chapter III., paragraph 8). The causes which produce this heavy mortality were fully explained in Chapter I. of last year's report (paragraph 6). This year the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet writes:—

"The majority of the immigrants pass up in the months from February to May, precisely at the tim when the rivers are at their lowest and cholera most prevalent.

"The subdivisional officer of Karimganj, who possesses exceptional facilities for checking illegal boat traffic, from the situation of the subdivisional head-quarters on the banks of the Kusiara, states that the law as to licenses (for all boats containing more than 20 persons) was entirely set at naught by mánjhis, who would pass up to Cachár carrying many more than their legal complement of immigrants. Eleven were prosecuted and eight punished. Since then there has been an improvement, and it is now rare to find boats carrying more than the proper number, and some have even come up with licenses. But the maximum number that an unlicensed boat should be allowed to carry ought to be limited to 10. Even when mánjhis carry no more than 20 coolies, there is ample opportunity of overcrowding."

As an instance of the difficulty there is in finding and punishing any of the sardars, whose neglect is so instrumental in raising the mortality *en route*, the following case, reported by the subdivisional officer of Habiganj, may be quoted.

"Last year a case of inhuman conduct was brought to light on the part of one of the peons or chaprasis sent up in charge of coolies by Messrs. Hira Lal Mukerji, the contractors. Cholera broke out in a boat carrying up coolies, one was attacked and became very ill from the disease. In order to be rid of an incumbrance, and, thinking that the poor man was sure to die, the chaprasi in charge, one Sri Náth Dás, turned him out on to a sandbank to take his chance of dying of cholera or surviving. Ultimately, the man revived, and arrived at his garden to tell the tale. A complaint was then lodged before my predecessor, Mr. Anderson, who instituted a prosecution against the peon under Section 308 of the Indian Penal Code. Warrants were issued for his apprehension, but at present he is still at large, and, though the contractors have been asked as to the man's whereabouts, nothing has been ascertained beyond the fact that the man is an inhabitant of the district of Jessore. Proclamations have been issued ordering his appearance and the seizure of his property in default."

The Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar, in whose district the effects of the long journey have been most disastrously felt, writes:—

"Some alteration in the mode of conveying coolies up to Cachar is urgently needed. The mortality, both that on the journey and that resulting from its after-effects, is excessive, and will continue so as long as the present system of conveying the coolies up in country boats continues. At present, the only security we have is that a waybill, which has to be presented to the Emigration Agent at Goalundo and endorsed by him, must accompany each batch. I suppose in half the cases the coolies and their waybill are never taken near the Emigration Agent at Goalundo, and, unless the batch is caught at Karimganj in Sylhet, it is the easiest thing in the world for a sardar or peon to land his coolies below Katigora or Silchar and walk them off to their destination without giving any information to the authorities. But even the presenting of the coolies and their waybill to the Emigration Agent at Goalundo is no security, for the coolies may be, and probably generally are, in good health on arrival at Goalundo, and the boat shown to the officer is a good one and well supplied. But no sooner is the waybill signed than the coolies are carried off to the other side of the river, and crowded into a filthy small boat, quite unable to contain them properly, and then they are started off with the scantiest of supplies. There is nothing wrong with the waybill when produced here or at Karimganj, and, unless more than twenty persons are brought up in an unlicensed boat, there is simply no means of punishing the peon or sardar. It is true that in the case of the sardar, if neglect be proved, he can be fined, but to realise that fine, unless it be a nominal one, is most difficult. To fine the peon is, as a rule, impossible, for he never comes as far as Silchar, but slips back to Goalundo, and practically it is impossible to find out who he is or where he lives. The contractor, his employer, cannot of course be touched, and the only remedy remaining is to cancel the coolie's contract. On the other hand, this would make the latter end of the coolie worse than the first, for there would be no one to look after him or supply him with food till he had recovered sufficiently from the journey, and would be very hard on the employer up here, the one man who has had absolutely nothing to do with the ill-treatment of the coolie. In fact, as matters stand, Chapter V. of Act I. of 1882 and the rules under it are simply a farce as far as Cachar is concerned."

Enquiries made by Mr. Ward when on tour in the Surma Valley in March last fully confirm all that the district officers have said on this subject. In August 1884, Mr. Elliott drew the special attention of the Government of India to the matter in his Secretary's letter No. 5,468, dated the 26th August 1884, and suggested the amendment of the Act with a view to enable the Chief Commissioner to exercise some control over the boats carrying not more than 20 persons. The matter having been referred to the Government of Bengal, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor expressed his opinion against the amendment of the Act and advocated improved steamer communication between Goalundo and the Surma Valley. Meanwhile, the question of establishing a daily accelerated steamer service between Narainganj and the districts of Sylhet and Cachar, with a view to improve communication between these districts and Bengal, had come before Mr. Ward shortly after he took charge in February last, and, after making full enquiry as to the probability of planters making use of such a service for the conveyance of labourers from Narainganj or Goalundo, he decided to offer a subsidy to the India General Steam Navigation Company if they would start an accelerated daily steamer service which would carry labourers *viâ* the Kusiara river from Narainganj to Karimganj during the dry season in two days, and to Silchar in the wet season in three days, calling at the principal stations *en route* to enable coolies destined for Sylhet gardens to disembark. The Director-General of Post-offices and the Government of Bengal having both agreed to contribute to the subsidy, the officiating Chief Commissioner hopes to see the new service started before long. The India General Steam Navigation Company have asked to be allowed to run the new service from Goalundo instead of from Narainganj; but, as there is already a railway steamer service between these two stations, this matter will have to be referred to the Government of India in the Public Works Department. It is only necessary here to state that if the new service is allowed to run from Goalundo, a further saving of 6 hours will be effected, as the time lost in transhipping coolies and cargo from the railway steamers to those of the accelerated service will be saved. Mr. Ward has little doubt that planters are

sufficiently alive to their own interests to make use of the new line of steamers for the conveyance of their coolies, even though the cost of importation may be somewhat in excess of that which is incurred under the present system of importing by boat; and if these anticipations are realised, there is no reason why the mortality of labourers *en route* to the Surma Valley should not be reduced to what it is among those who immigrate to the Assam Valley.

Meanwhile, all that can be done is to keep an effective watch upon all boats coming up the Kusiara river and to prosecute all mánjhis who carry more than 20 persons. There is no reason why this should not be done, and it is now being done at Karimganj, the first station on the river, after leaving Narainganj, at which there is a Magistrate. But there is no means of effectually checking the malpractices of mánjhis who land coolies for Sylhet gardens below Karimganj, and avoid, as they easily can avoid, the existing depôts at Habiganj, Maulavi Bázár, and Bálaganj.

Popularity of the Act.

4. The only officers that have expressed any opinion upon the question of the popularity of Act I. of 1882 are the Deputy-Commissioners of Sylhet and Sibságar, and the subdivisional officer of Karimganj. The Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet (Mr. Stevenson) says:—

"I think I am warranted in stating that increased familiarity with the Act and experience of its working have had but the result of making employers of labour the more anxious for its repeal, and I have but little doubt that the Act labourers, if capable of forming and expressing an opinion, would be found to be of the same mind."

The Deputy-Commissioner then proceeds to quote with approval the following remarks of the subdivisional officer of Karimganj (Mr. Porteous).

"The Act is not popular. There is a general tendency among managers to free themselves from its restraints as far as possible, by employing only free coolies. At the close of the year 1884, the proportion of labourers (*i.e.*, Act coolies) to the total adult labour force in Karimganj was only 16 per cent.; only 1,038 persons of a total of 7,486 adults were labourers, and even of that number a considerable percentage are merely on yearly agreements. * * * I believe the repeal of Act I. of 1882 would, except in the case of new and unhealthy gardens, cause little or no regret among the planters here, provided that the rules as to keeping up registers and submission of returns went with it, and that Act XIII. of 1859 was not interfered with. Any attempt to repeal the latter Act would meet with very strong opposition. * * Most of the elaborate provisions of the Act are a dead letter as regards the labourer. There is scarcely the smallest difference made in the treatment accorded to labourers as compared with other coolies. Both are, I have every reason to believe, as a rule well treated. The labourer rarely, if ever, avails himself of any of the provisions of the Act in his favour, and the planter never of those which are conceived in his, excepting the one great power of arrest without warrant. This power really marks the distinction between the Act labourer and the ordinary coolie. The former, as he well knows, may be summarily apprehended and imprisoned for desertion, the latter can at worst only be bound over to complete his contract if caught, and his apprehension can only be effected by warrant. * * The main objection to the repeal of the Act would be that remote and unhealthy gardens, or gardens for any other reason unpopular with coolies, would have difficulties in obtaining labour without its aid; but no better reason for the repeal of the Act could surely be found than this fact. If a garden has disadvantages, its owners should be prepared to pay to remedy them; it is no part of the duty of Government to provide them with cheap labour. The main effect of the Act is to keep down wages without to any appreciable extent bettering the condition of the labourer. * * * If the same amount of inspection as the law at present permits in the case of non-Act gardens were retained, with some power to Inspectors to enforce the due observance of sanitary regulations and the submission of statistics, I consider the abolition of the Act would be a distinct advantage. It would stop the binding down of newly-imported unacclimatised coolies, ignorant of the conditions under which they are to labour, to work for periods of three years or more on unhealthy gardens, where they have to choose between the risk of death if they stay, or imprisonment if they desert."

On the other hand, the Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar writes in quite a different strain; he says:—

"There seems to be a general feeling, in spite of some assertions to the contrary, that the Emigration Act provides substantial benefits for the employer to be weighed against the returns and inspections which are said by some to be so severe a trial of the tea-planter's patience. * * * That the Act suits planters' needs is, I think, sufficiently shown by the fact that it is largely used, and, as regards its penal provisions, but rarely enforced."

The officiating Chief Commissioner would have been glad to have received more evidence than has been brought forward in the district reports to support Mr. Stevenson's opinion that employers of labour are anywhere in the province anxious for the total repeal of the Emigration Act; and he is inclined to doubt very much whether any such general desire exists on the part of the planting community. It is unnecessary to consider the labourer's possible view of the question, if he were capable of entertaining one and expressing it. With reference to Mr. Porteous's opinion, it is only necessary to state that

there exist more and weightier objections to the total repeal of the Act than the one stated by him. The officiating Chief Commissioner has little doubt that both employer and labourer would suffer considerably if the Act were repealed. What the employer really wants is an amendment of the Act and a relaxation of the rules issued under the Act, which will give him more freedom of action, subject him to less interference on the part of Government in the details of garden administration, and exempt him from the liability to keep up and prepare and submit troublesome registers and returns.

Relations of employers and labourers.

5. The relations between employers and labourers during the past year have been satisfactory. There have, of course, been isolated cases in which the coolies, in many instances, excited by the customary indulgences of pay-day, have proved insubordinate, but in no case has there been any determined and premeditated resistance. The Officiating Chief Commissioner is glad to report that in the Sylhet district there has been no repetition of what occurred in the previous year on the Bálisira gardens. The Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar (Mr. Anderson) writes:—

"The relations of labourers with their employers have been on the whole, and especially on the larger gardens, eminently satisfactory. Much of the immigrant population of the district is of old standing, and the coolies are well acquainted with their rights, privileges, and liabilities. They are not so prosperous as the coolies of the Surma Valley, bázárs are not so numerous, food and clothing not so cheap, but they have ready access to the courts, and, judging by the nature of the few complaints that have come before me, they have little cause for grumbling."

In Lakhimpur there was one case of organised opposition, in which a new manager, who had made himself unpopular by excess of zeal in the direction of reform, caned one of the coolies, whereupon the coolies retaliated and beat him severely.

From Cachar six cases of insubordination are reported, of which three bear a somewhat serious aspect. They are thus described by the Deputy-Commissioner:—

"In the sadr the only serious offence committed by coolies was a riotous attack on the manager of Bowalia garden. The assault was a very serious one, the manager being kept a prisoner for some hours in his house; but he had to a certain extent brought the attack on himself by defiantly caning a boy in the presence of the assembled coolies. About a dozen men were sentenced to various terms of imprisoment for from three days to one year, and the manager was fined Rs. 200. The Judge upheld the sentences on the coolies, but reduced the fine on the manager to Rs. 50.

"Towards the end of the year there was a smaller case of besieging the assistant manager of Chinkuri in his bungalow. No assault, however, was committed, and I was unable to find any reason for the disturbance, save a dispute as to pay with the Babu of the out-garden. A number of women, as well as men, were brought up before me, but I thought in this case a warning to the women and a month's imprisonment for some of the men was quite sufficient."

In the third case it was a native manager who was assaulted by the coolies, who accused him of insulting their women, and tying him on his pony took him 11 miles to the bungalow of the European Superintendent.

Relations between tea-garden population and villagers.

6. The comparative density of the population of Sylhet makes it the only district in which any real difficulties are to be feared between the managers of tea-gardens and the surrounding villagers; and, although there has been only one actual collision reported during the course of 1884, the want of room has been distinctly felt when large tracts have been opened out for tea on the borders of the district. The opening out of some roads to the large new gardens in the Balisira Hills of South Sylhet raised some objections on the part of proprietors of land with whom the company could not come to terms; but the matter was in most cases satisfactorily compromised by the Local Board agreeing to acquire the land, and by the roads consequently becoming public ones. The subdivisional officer of Karimganj is more gloomy on this point, and says—

"The amount of land available for cultivation by ryots in the south of this subdivision has been seriously trenched on by tea-garden extension on *bil* lands, and much heart-burning on the part of intending settlers has been the result. In one case an attack was made on the manager of the Baithakhal tea-garden by the villagers of a neighbouring *basti*, the cause of the attack being quarrels about land. He escaped without hurt. Several of his assailants were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. In two other cases, charges of mischief to crops were brought against managers, but both were found false and dismissed. In both cases conflicting claims to land had given rise to ill-feeling, and the Sylhetia, according to his wont, tried to gain his point by the institution of a criminal case."

The officiating Chief Commissioner hopes that the new rules limiting grants to an area of 600 acres, and requiring the interests of the villagers in grazing and forest lands to be carefully safeguarded, will prove sufficient to cope with the evil here complained of.

The Deputy-Commissioner of Nowgong reports that a few disputes as to cattle-trespass alone disturbed the harmony in his district between planter and villager, and

the Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang remarks on this point also as being a grievance to the villagers whose cattle used to roam free on waste land now planted out with tea.

7. In the table of the rates of wages submitted last year, a column was given for "lowest rate" in any one month. It has not been thought necessary to submit again the information contained in that column, as so many reasons, such as voluntary leave of absence or sickness, may combine to lower the pay received by any one labourer in a particular month. On the other hand, the figures of "highest wage" are useful, as showing what it is possible for one able-bodied coolie to earn on a tea-garden. The following statement is based on the inspection reports of a number of gardens, in which each inspecting officer is required to state the average and highest wages earned by labourers during the month preceding that of inspection :—

			Monthly wages.	
			Average. Rs. As. P.	Highest. Rs. As. P.
North Sylhet (11)	Act	Men	4 1 7	6 12 2
		Women	3 8 4	5 0 1
	Non-Act	Men	4 9 10	7 4 0
		Women	3 9 0	5 12 1
		Children	2 3 9	3 7 4
South Sylhet (21)	Act	Men	4 11 6	6 9 2
		Women	3 10 0	5 11 0
	Non-Act	Men	5 0 10	7 3 3
		Women	3 10 5	5 8 1
		Children	2 4 0	3 8 6
Karimganj (30)	Act	Men	4 0 9	6 3 10
		Women	2 9 0	4 6 6
	Non-Act	Men	4 1 7	6 14 8
		Women	3 1 5	5 10 6
		Children	2 3 11	4 4 3
Habiganj (5)	Act	Men	5 1 8	10 0 4
		Women	4 0 3	8 15 0
	Non-Act	Men	4 14 1	10 0 4
		Women	4 14 6	11 8 2
		Children	3 10 5	5 13 2
Cachar	Act	Men	4 4 7	8 11 4
		Women	3 11 2	9 1 8
	Non-Act	Men	4 5 0	10 8 6
		Women	3 10 10	9 9 8
		Children	2 2 5	6 10 3
Lakhimpur (131)	Act	Men	4 6 3	8 6 9
		Women	3 12 3	10 0 0
	Non-Act	Men	5 12 9	11 6 0
		Women	4 15 1	10 10 0
		Children	2 12 0	5 15 6
Sibságar	Act	Men	4 8 10	25 0 0
		Women	3 10 4	27 3 0
	Non-Act	Men	4 8 5	22 8 0
		Women	3 7 5	23 7 0
		Children	2 1 2	13 9 6
Nowgong (23)	Act	Men	4 9 9	5 13 9
		Women	3 12 6	5 7 1
	Non-Act	Men	5 8 5	12 9 4
		Women	4 3 9	8 10 6
		Children	2 8 11	4 4 0
Darrang (Act 62, Non-Act 69)	Act	Men	4 9 2	6 11 6
		Women	3 8 10	6 2 8
	Non-Act	Men	5 3 7	10 1 7
		Women	3 7 5	9 4 6
		Children	2 5 6	5 0 0
Kámrúp (19)	Act	Men	4 3 1	5 5 0
		Women	3 12 2	4 1 0
	Non-Act	Men	4 10 7	5 15 0
		Women	3 15 2	4 8 6
		Children	2 7 0	3 4 6

So far as the figures given in the above statement are reliable, they go to show that wages have improved very little since last year. A coolie family, however, even in Sylhet, in which district the average rate of wages is lowest, would be always able to support itself by the wage of from Rs. 9-5 to Rs. 10 to be earned by a man, his wife, and one child. The fall of wages in Cachar is noticeable, and tends to confirm the statement frequently made, that the large importation of labour in late years has tended to overstock gardens with a labour force for which employment cannot always be found. It is noticeable also that, as a rule, the wages of non-Act coolies are higher than those obtained by labourers under the Act, a fact which it is not very easy to account for, unless the explanation is that, while the figures of the wages of Act labourers include the earnings of new coolies, who do not understand the work, and are often enfeebled by their recent change of climate, the figures of wages

*N.B.—The figures against the name of each district indicate the number of inspection reports from which the averages are drawn. Where no figures are shown the number of inspection reports has not been given by the district officer

of non-Act coolies include the wages paid to the most experienced and sturdy workers on the garden.

The following remarks on this subject are extracted from various district reports. The Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar, alluding to the low rate of wages shown by his figures, says—

"These figures are certainly misleading for both classes of coolies, and do not take into account the cattle, swine, or paddy-fields owned by coolies. I have been particularly struck with this fact, especially in the southern parts of the district. In some large gardens a number of men live in the lines who really never do a stroke of work for the garden, and the only explanation I can give of this is that they have a number of dependents, who can be turned out to work on an emergency."

In Lakhimpur, the Deputy-Commissioner writes—

"Among Act coolies in one garden 49 Act men made an average of Rs. 8-6-9 in October. There was hoeing and plucking going on at the same time. Again, on another garden in the month of August 59 Act women earned Rs. 10 each. * * * * In one respect the statements fall short of the truth, that is, the value of diet given to sick coolies is not shown. It is only fair that this item should be taken into account when totalling up the earnings of coolies. It would increase the average, I think, to an appreciable degree. Then, again, such things as presents of rum and blankets are not shown, all of which go to make up the expenditure on tea-gardens, and constitute a portion of the tea-coolie's emoluments."

The officiating Chief Commissioner is glad to note the following remarks by the Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang with reference to what was said in Chapter I, paragraph 15 of last year's report, on the subject of employers not giving their labourers any work at certain seasons of the year.

"Managers fully recognise that they are bound to supply work to the Act coolies, and a careful inspection of the registers shows that a coolie can, if he chooses, and in many cases does, earn the full Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 in the cold weather as in the hot. There is, however, one other thing to be remembered, and that is that it often actually pays a coolie for himself and his family to take a holiday. The price of *dhán*, as compared with rice, is notoriously cheap throughout the district, and it therefore pays a coolie either to cultivate himself, which some managers encourage, or, when the crop is cut, to go and buy it in the villages and store it up for the rains. The average price of *dhán* is ordinarily Re. 1 per maund, which would give 26 seers of rice; in some parts of the district 1½ or 2 maunds can be got for the rupee, while the ordinary price of rice is Re. 1 for 16 seers. This year it has been particularly dear. Some coolies also in the cold weather cut the crops for the villagers, receiving grain as wages."

In Sibságar the figures given showing the highest wage of labourers are abnormally high. The Deputy-Commissioner has explained that they include the wages of extra taskwork, or "ticca pice." Last year's report (Chapter I., paragraph 15) alluded to the fact that these earnings were generally excluded from the statement of average wages, thus making the latter appear less than they really were. It is uncertain how far ticca pice have been included in these returns for 1884. The Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang says that some inspectors include them, but most do not. In the Lakhimpur returns they seem to have been included, and probably they account for the high earnings of Act women, which were calculated on the average earnings of 59 women in the month of August, a month when extra task work is easily obtainable. The earnings of Act men, on the other hand, were calculated in the month of October, when there is less task work. On the whole, the figures given in the table on page 5 cannot be construed as indicating the average earnings of any class of coolie all the year round. The main point to be attended to is the caution given in last year's report, *viz.*, that where men's average wages fall below Rs. 4, or women's below Rs. 3, the inspecting officer should ascertain whether it was by their own fault that they earned so little.

8. The following statement shows the number and nature of the offences for which tea-garden coolies have been convicted in the past two years.

Offences committed by tea-garden coolies.

District.	Penal Code.																											
	Unlawful assembly and affray.	Rioting.	Causing death by rash or negligent act.	Culpable homicide.	Murder.	Attempt to murder.	Attempt to commit suicide.	Assault.	Causing hurt.	Grievous hurt.	Theft.	Criminal trespass.	Lurking house-trespass.	House-trespass.	House-breaking.	Dishonest misappropriation.	Dishonestly receiving stolen property.	Criminal intimidation.	Cheating.	Mischief.	Defamation.	Obstructing public servant.	Criminal breach of trust.	Laying false complaints.	Wrongful restraint.	Counterfeit coin.	Unnatural offence.	Rape.
Sylhet	..	9	..	9	..	1	1	12	4	..	18	9	4	4	..	..	7	..	1	..	..	..	3	..	3	..	..	..
Cachar	12	6	..	..	..	..	3	30	11	7	24	2	..	..	3	1	30	1	2	1	..	1	6	..	1	..	..	..
Lakhimpur	..	16	1	..	1	..	..	11	28	..	26	9	..	..	5	..	1	..	2	4	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..
Sibsagar	26	14	..	2	..	..	1	10	3	..	9	1	..	..	10	..	2	..	..	4	..	1	1	..	..	2	..	..
Nowgong	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	1	..	2	8	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Darrang	..	6	..	1	..	..	2	5	..	9	29	4	..	..	6	1	4	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
Kámrup	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total for 1884..	44	51	1	12	1	1	7	71	48	16	108	33	4	4	24	2	44	2	5	9	..	2	11	..	8	2	..	1
Total for 1883..	128	71	..	4	..	1	5	39	47	..	72	20	..	..	9	5	13	2	12	6	1	3	6	3	7	3	1	..

District.	Penal Code.—(*Contd.*)																Act I. of 1882.												
	Insult.	Committing affray.	Resistance to lawful apprehension.	Miscarriage.	Wrongful confinement.	Offences against public tranquillity.	Contempt of lawful authority.	Offences relating to marriage.	Criminal force.	Escaping from lawful custody.	Arson.	Forfeiture of recognizance.	Total.	Act XIII. of 1859.	Offences under other Acts.	Act V. of 1861.	Section 171, unlawful absence.	Section 175, desertion.	Section 178, habitual misconduct.	Section 183, enticing.	Section 176, compensation for unlawful arrest.	Section 151, sardar failing to report.	Section 153, garden sardar failing to comply with instructions endorsed on the way-bill.	Section 154, master receiving native passengers in contravention of Act.	Section 163, neglecting to submit returns.	Section 164, obstructing inspection.	Section 172, apprehension of a deserter without warrant.	Total.	Grand total of all offences.
Sylhet	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	86	18	14	..	..	48	..	..	..	..	1	11	7	1	1	69	187
Cachar	2	9	..	..	..	1	..	..	7	..	2	..	162	[illegible]	1	21	7	196	..	25	2	2	4	..	..	..	..	236	422
Lakhimpur	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	..	..	111	25	4	11	3	80	..	1	..	3	.	..	..	..	..	87	238
Sibságar	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	89	21	4	14	13	108	2	9	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	132	260
Nowgong	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	21	3	2	..	..	37	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	40	66
Darrang	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	71	..	7	1	14	62	1	12	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	93	172
Kámrup	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	8	..	..	..	25	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	25	34
Total for 1884	5	9	2	..	..	1	..	2	7	1	2	1	541	77	32	47	37	556	3	50	2	9	5	11	7	1	1	682	1,379
Total for 1883	2	5	1	2	4	11	1	1	..	1	..	..	485	233	1	33	47	609	..	36	..	14	1	1	..	..	1	709	1,461

There has thus been a large increase in the number of convictions under the Penal Code, the number being 541, as against 485 in 1883 and 476 in 1882. The convictions under Act I. of 1882 have fallen from 709 to 682, there having been only 556 convictions for desertion, as against 609 in 1883; but, on the other hand, 11 of the penal sections have been made use of, as against 7 only in 1883, and 126 convictions have been obtained under sections other than Section 175 (desertion), as compared with 100 last year.

Convictions under Act XIII. of 1859 have decreased from 233 to 77, a total which shows that the Act, for one reason or another, is little used on the whole in this province. On this point, however, the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar writes—

"The reason for the fall in Act-XIII. cases (2 in 1884, as against 43 in 1883) is simply that in 1884 no officer was specially empowered under the Act in the district, save one Extra-Assistant-Commissioner at head-quarters, and, under the instructions of Mr. Wight, my predecessor, this officer refused to recognise as having a penalty enforceable in a criminal court any contracts entered into by tea-garden coolies that were not registered under Act I. of 1882."

The Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet says—

"The falling off in the number of prosecutions under Act XIII. is noteworthy. It is due not by any means to that Act falling into disfavour or to the planters deeming a local contract under Act I. an improvement upon those under Act XIII., but mainly to a doubt, more or less general amongst the planting community, whether Act XIII. was not abrogated by Act I., so that no court would enforce a contract under it."

The figures given below show that while total desertions have increased from 3,662 to 4,188, the number of convictions has decreased from 609 to 556. Desertions have been more numerous in every district except Lakhimpur, and in Sylhet they have reached the enormous figure of 1,271. The following table shows the details by districts:—

District.	Number deserted (Act coolies).	Number of warrants issued.	Number arrested.			Number convicted.
			By warrant.	By managers.	Total.	
Sylhet	1,271	81	68	29	97	48
Cachar	960	35	62	170	232	196
Lakhimpur	700	36	23	57	80	80
Sibságar	745	69	21	90	111	108
Nowgong.....	177	19	10	28	38	37
Darrang	283	110	45	21	66	62
Kámrúp	52	8	8	18	26	25
Total	4,188	358	237	413	650	556

In commenting on the figures for his own district, the Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang remarks—

"This statement shows the number of coolies who desert, and whose desertion is brought to the notice of the Magistrates and Deputy-Commissioners either owing to the issue of some process, or owing to their being shown in the half-yearly returns as having deserted. In many cases managers

send at once after the coolies, and, finding them, do not care to punish them by law; as in many cases, when new coolies, having been induced by others to run away, have incurred considerable hardship and undergone exposure in the jungles, the managers rightly think they have been sufficiently punished. It is only where an example is needed, or where a man is an old coolie, that many managers care to have their coolies imprisoned."

The Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar states—

"Comparing the desertions of 1884 with those of 1883, we find that a greater number of deserters got clear away in 1884 than in 1883, and that the desertions nearly doubled, while arrests and convictions remained much the same. In fact, it is an uncommonly easy thing for a coolie to desert successfully from any part of the district, a few gardens only excepted, which lie away in the jungle."

Ratio of crime to population.

9. It is satisfactory to note that, with a larger coolie population, the number of convictions of coolies for any offence has fallen from 1,461 to 1,379, or from ·95 per cent. of the total adult garden population to ·77 per cent. The ratio in 1882 was 1 per cent. The decrease in the percentage of crime is even more noticeable when we compare the numbers of coolies sent to jail. The Jail Report of 1883 showed 928 tea-garden coolies sent to jail; the Report of 1884 shows only 793, or a decrease from ·62 per cent. of the adult tea-garden population to ·44. The figures for the entire population native to the province in the same years give, in 1883, 2,337 imprisonments, or ·055 per cent., and in 1884, 2,406 imprisonments, or ·051 per cent., but it must be remembered that the figures for tea-garden coolies are calculated only on the adult population of tea-gardens.

The following figures show the statistics of crime among tea-garden coolies during the past two years.

District.	Mean adult garden population.		Number convicted of any offence (statement in paragraph 9.)		Number sent to prison (Jail Report).		Ratio of conviction to population.	
	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.
Sylhet	23,073	29,351	191	187	105	78	·83	·63
Cachar	42,048	46,480	485	422	320	260	1·15	·90
Lakhimpur	29,445	32,277	258	238	118	119	·86	·73
Sibságar	37,077	42,341	317	260	232	168	·85	·61
Nowgong	5,773	8,041	49	66	52	51	·85	·82
Darrang	14,953	17,399	153	172	94	94	1·02	·98
Kámrúp	1,365	1,729	8	34	7	23	·59	1·96
Total	153,739	177,622	1,461	1,379	928	793	·95	·77

This table shows that the improvement has been shared by almost all the districts equally, Kámrúp alone showing an increased percentage, wholly due to the greater use made by the planters of that district of Act I. of 1882, there having been 25 convictions for desertion under Section 175 of that Act, as against 4 only in 1883. The number of convictions reported from Cachar continues large, but it is noticeable that the convictions under the Penal Code in that district have decreased from 208 to 162. The Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur reports a case in which some Sonthali coolies, under the influence of pachwai of their own manufacture, attacked some women, whom they accused of witchcraft, and severely maltreated them. The Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar has omitted to give details of the cases shown in his return, among which is one in which 20 coolies were convicted of unlawful assembly and affray.

Expiry and cancelment of contracts.

10. There has been a great improvement in the reporting by managers of time-expired contracts under Section 141, but still less than one-half of those that expire are thus reported. The Chief Commissioner hopes that district officers will be careful to secure continued improve

ment in this direction. The figures of the expiry and cancelment of contracts for each district separately are given below.

District.	Number shown in garden returns as time-expired.	Number of time-expired reported under Section 141.	Number cancelled, Section 122.	Number redeemed, Section 142.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.	Cancelled, Section 140.	Under Section 177.
Sylhet	1,743	1,178	15(*a*)	29	31	...	...
Cachar	5,668	2,091	15(*b*)	11	19	1	4
Lakhimpur	5,368	1,089	113	5	...	...	...
Sibságar	8,314	3,773	88	1	3	...	...
Nowgong	449	.....	107	...	4	...	...
Darrang	2,817	651	17	...	...	...	...
Kámrúp	198	150	1	2	...	...	...
Total 1884	24,557	8,932	356	48	57	1	4
Total 1883	14,764	1,946	505	21	6	...	...

*(*a*) 2 cancelled at depôt.
(*b*) 1 ditto ditto.

It is satisfactory to find a large diminution in the number of contracts cancelled for permanent unfitness under Section 122. This is almost wholly due to the Lakhimpur district, where only 113 contracts were cancelled in 1884 under that section, as compared with 382 in 1883. On this point, the Deputy-Commissioner remarks—

"As a rule, the cancellations occur among coolies who are more or less physically unfit when they arrive on the garden.

" There were no contracts cancelled at the depôt. For my part I doubt the humanity of cancelling contracts immediately on arrival and before despatch of the coolies to the garden. The three months' wages awarded is not sufficient to take the emigrant back to his home, so he must be left at the depôt or the ghát, and he will be in a very much worse plight than if he were sent on to the garden. The same difficulty, of course, occurs whenever contracts are cancelled under Section 122, but managers often allow the discharged coolie to live with his friends in the lines, and generally provide him with medical comforts. This is more humane than leaving a labourer helpless at the ghát or setting him adrift in the bázár."

No less than 67 of the 113 cancelments under this section in Lakhimpur were made within a year of the coolie's arrival, but no information on this point has been received from the districts of Sibságar and Nowgong, where nearly two hundred cancelments were made under this section. In one case in Lakhimpur no less than Rs. 99 were paid for the redemption of a contract by a coolie woman under Section 142. It would seem to be only in Sylhet and Cachar that advantage is taken of the power left to the contracting parties to dissolve contracts by mutual consent, and even in these districts it is very seldom resorted to.

Settlement of garden labourers on the land.

11. On the important question as to how far immigrants imported for tea-garden labour may be expected to settle in the province and form a portion of its permanent population, the district reports differ considerably. The figures below show the amount of land returned by manzadárs as held by immigrants in the last two years in the various districts of the Assam Valley. The figures for Sylhet and Cachar, which are obtained under totally different conditions, are given separately:—

District.	1883. Acres.	1884. Acres.
Lakhimpur	1,483	1,505
Sibságar	809	1,224
Nowgong	392	437
Darrang	2,140	2,467
Kámrúp	14	14
Total ...	4,838	5,647

The following extracts from the district reports, bearing on this statement, will be found interesting.

The Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang says—

"The expansion is solely confined to the sadr division, there being no increase whatever in Mangaldai. There were at the close of the year 1,328 *patta*-holders amongst the immigrants in the sadr and 21 in the Mangaldai sub-division. These immigrants have settled down to agricultural pursuits, and there are now several colonies of them. I have made careful enquiries about this in Mangaldai, but cannot ascertain a good reason why more land is not taken up by time-expired labourers; when they leave a garden, they appear to prefer to get quite away out of the district. In the sadr sub-division, on the other hand, time-expired coolies go to neighbouring villages, where their fellow-countrymen are already in possession of flourishing homesteads, and there is every reason to anticipate a steady increase in this kind of cultivation."

In Nowgong—

"The increase is very small. Labourers, as a rule, either continue in the same garden or go to some other garden, or, if they have saved money and are tired of Assam, they leave the province. There does not appear any growing desire on their part to settle down as agriculturists. If they continue in the district, and do not care about garden work, they become cart-drivers and shop-keepers."

In Sibságar—

"I cannot claim much accuracy for these figures. But if they err, they under-estimate the land held by time-expired coolies. There are many colonies of Sonthals and Bhuiyas in all parts of the district. Much of the trade in country spirits has fallen into their hands, and in many cases they are doing well."

It is very difficult, on the other hand, to find out in Sylhet and Cachar how far tea-coolies do settle down on the land, owing to the absolutely different conditions under which land is held. In Cachar, many coolie *bastis* are rented from mirasdars with whom Government has settled the land, and it is impossible to obtain statistics of such leases. There were, however, 386¾ acres of land settled with tea-garden coolies in Cachar in 1884, as against 51½ in 1883, and on the general extension of coolie settlements Mr. Kennedy writes—

"In almost all parts of the district coolies have settled, and it is believed that within the next 20 years the district will have a large number of coolie *bastis*, for very few of them, I understand, prefer to go home after the expiry of their contracts."

In Sylhet, the Deputy-Commissioner can give no further information than that 83 acres of garden land were taken up by coolies during the year, but there is no guarantee that such occupation is even permanent. Only in Jaintia and Pratábgarh are there such large quantities of Government *khás* land that coolies would be likely to take any up, and no such settlements are reported in those parganas.

Submission of returns.

12. It is satisfactory to note that as the Act becomes better known and understood, the returns required under it are submitted with increasing readiness and punctuality. In every district some improvement is reported, except in Cachar, where matters seem as bad as ever in this respect. In Lakhimpur the Deputy-Commissioner reported last year that the majority of the managers submitted no returns of births and deaths, but he is now able to report the result of some executive energy in this matter, thus:—

"Monthly returns of births and deaths are sent in by all gardens; those that neglected this rule were prosecuted under Section 163 of the Act. There were 12 employers prosecuted under this rule and section. Greater punctuality was also observed in the submission of half-yearly returns. The number of employers prosecuted for neglecting to submit those returns was 8."

There was fair punctuality in the submission of returns by managers in Kámrúp and Darrang; and in Nowgong a very distinct improvement was manifested. The Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet admits greater regularity in submission, but complains that the returns are frequently filled in so carelessly as to be almost useless. An instance of this occurred when some returns were asked for from managers for use in the compilation of the Tea Report, and one manager estimated the cost of manufacture of 1lb of tea at Rs. 10. The Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar writes—

"There has been much improvement in the submission of returns, chiefly owing to the early issue of reminders and much clerical labour in the Deputy-Commissioner's office. Most managers, however, submitted their returns with exemplary punctuality, and to several I owe thanks for a very obliging readiness to supplement returns with information on collateral subjects."

The Officiating Chief Commissioner's thanks are due to those managers who by such punctuality and readiness have saved district officers and their subordinates much useless waste of time and labour.

Debarkation depôts.

13. As desired by the Chief Commissioner in a circular issued during the year 1884, all the district officers, except the Deputy-Commissioner of Kámrúp, in whose district there is no debarkation depôt, have submitted figures of the working of debarkation depôts under their charge. The following figures show how far these depôts have been used during the year. The second column gives the number of immigrants as shown in the returns submitted by managers :—

District.	Number of depôts.	Total number of immigrants to district.	Number that passed through the depôt.	Number detained at depôt		Number that died at depôts.	Expenditure	
				through want of a guide.	in hospital.		Buildings.	Establishment, &c.
							Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
Sylhet	5	9,412	3,401	.....	221	10*a*	786 14 3	1,649 6 11
Cachar	2	8,656	4,578	.....	425	101	233 8 6	2,772 12 2
Nowgong	1	2,675	1,973	.....	18	6	*Nil.*	977 13 7
Darrang	2	4,624	4,484	1,046	19	7	216 13 9	2,548 0 6
Sibságar	3	10,438	12,904*b*	1,439	117	26	862 14 8	2,101 10 2
Lakhimpur	1	9,299	8,578	3,751	58	16	210 0 0	1,562 0 0
Total	14	45,104	35,918	6,236	858	166	2,310 3 2	11,611 11 4

(*a*) At sadr depôt only. No record kept of deaths at Habiganj.
(*b*) Including immigrants locally contracted at Dhubri, and not shown in manager's returns, and also some immigrants destined for gardens in North Lakhimpur

These figures go to show that while the depôts are a success in the Assam Valley, they have to a great extent failed in the Surma Valley. This is mainly due to the different conditions under which the coolies travel. In the Brahmaputra Valley the arrival of the despatch steamer with immigrants is notified to the officer in charge of the depôt, who can immediately ensure that all these passengers are examined and entered in his registers before they go on to the garden. In the Surma Valley the immigrants may pass the depôt at any hour of the day or night in small boats, and so escape the eye of the depôt officials. Moreover, instead of their being landed at a depôt, coolies are often put on shore at the point which the sardar may deem nearest to his garden, and so escape registration at the depôts. Sylhet naturally fails most in this respect. In Cachar the coolies must all come up the main stream past the depôt at Katigora, but in Sylhet there are innumerable small rivers and kháls which communicate with the various groups of gardens, and over the coolies going up these it is impossible to keep an efficient control.

The prescribed depôt registers are now kept up in the Assam Valley, and the statistics above may be taken as a fairly correct account of the work done in the depôts of that valley. In the Surma Valley the depôts have been longer in getting into working order, and the figures relating to them cannot claim equal correctness.

It appears from the statement that, while the detentions from sickness were very numerous in the Surma Valley, owing to the proved unhealthiness of the journey up, the depôts in the Assam Valley had little to do beyond the examining and registering of the passing coolies, and seeing that they did not start for their gardens without a guide.

On the working of the depôt system the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet says—

"The depôt at Balaganj has not up to date been made use of; the Cachar, Karimganj, and Langla going coolies do not seem to have taken shelter in it. Except at Sylhet and Habiganj, we cannot be said to have any depôts, properly speaking. I should consider a place to be a depôt which could accommodate batches under observation and separately put up cases of contagious diseases. This to a greater or less extent we can do at the two places above mentioned; but everywhere else we have but a small shed run up in a dispensary compound, with a few rupees extra paid to the Hospital-Assistant in charge from the Inland Labour Transport Fund. It is, I think, a misnomer to call these depôts. * * Many batches, no doubt, elude the depôts. Coolies for gardens in Patharia generally leave their boats at Fenchuganj and march across. I am not aware of any free immigrants being treated at a depôt. We cannot force any of these to remain at a depôt, but they can always obtain assistance. The charge for board in our depôts was reduced during the year from 4 annas for adults and 2 annas for children over 10 to 3 annas and 1½ annas respectively."

The Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar remarks—

"The situation of the Silchar depôt is a bad one both for the coolies, being low, and for the town, which has grown up around it; and it is at present under consideration to move it elsewhere. There is no doubt these depôts have proved of considerable service in detaining coolies quite unfit for immediate garden work, and in saving a heavy mortality to some tea-gardens. Chandighát is an instance of a garden which imported coolies who never stopped at a depôt, and its very high death-rate tells its own tale."

Cost of Importation.

14. In his Secretary's letter to the Government of India, dated the 28th October 1880, the Chief Commissioner noted that the cost of importation of coolies had been steadily rising, and advocated a reduction in the cost of recruitment by the intervention of the law in removing restrictions. The Officiating Chief Commissioner is glad to be able now to give figures showing that this object has been to a great extent gained by the operation of the provisions of Act I. of 1882. In the letter above quoted Mr. Lyall said—

"In 1875 the cost of bringing coolies up to Sibságar was Rs. 35. In 1878 three batches averaged Rs. 66, Rs. 84, and Rs. 76 per head respectively. In 1879 the Assam Company (Sibságar) landed 404 adults for a total of Rs. 34,645, or say Rs. 85-12 per head. From Darrang the Deputy-Commissioner gives instances in the same year of coolies costing Rs. 70, Rs. 103, and even Rs. 110 respectively. The Dibrugarh planters give Rs. 70, Rs. 80, and Rs. 110 as the cost per head of various batches in the year."

The figures given by the various Deputy-Commissioners for the year 1884 show considerable reductions in the cost of importation. In Sibságar a batch of coolies chosen from the contractors' depôts in Calcutta are said to have cost Rs. 70 per head by the time they arrived on the garden, while sardari coolies imported through local agents cost Rs. 56 per head, "out of which more than half was paid to the local agents as diet-money and commission."

In Darrang the highest figure given as regards sardari recruiting is Rs. 60, and the lowest Rs. 35, with an average rate of Rs. 48. In the same district a proprietor reported that contractors' coolies cost him Rs. 80 per head. The Deputy-Commissioner also adds—

"When in Mangaldai this year I met a fine batch of coolies numbering about 30 souls, who had just arrived at a cost of Rs. 55 per adult. This was, however, a cheap lot for the class of coolie."

But the most trustworthy figures come from the Deputy-Commissioner of Nowgong, who has gone into this subject carefully and produced some instructive results. The coolies forwarded from Dhubri pass mainly through the hands of two suppliers of labour, Babu Hira Lal Mukerji or Mr. Saubolle, who is the agent of the Tea Districts Labour-supply Association. Mr. Driberg quotes the terms offered by Babu Hira Lal Mukerji in full, and, as they are in many ways instructive as giving a glimpse of the actual system of importation, they are reproduced here :—

"We guarantee to each garden an average of five coolies a sardar in the jungly districts, and of seven coolies a sardar in the up-country districts.

"That all losses from death, desertions, rejections, and unwillingness amongst coolies before final shipment from Goalundo or Dhubri be borne in full by us. That we are not responsible for casualties amongst coolies (actually recruited by the sardars) after their despatch from Dhubri or Goalundo.

"That the rates to be charged on the number of coolies actually shipped (to the Assam Valley) will be as follows:—

	Rs.	As.
Emigrants on contract	40	0
Registered dependents above 10 years of age	35	0
" " below 10 and above 2 and aged dependents.	17	8

"These rates are exclusive of steamer freight and provisions on board the steamer.

"That the charges for coolies proceeding independently of the Act along with Act coolies will be Rs. 5 less than the rate fixed.

"That the expenses of a sardar on account of his train hire from Calcutta to district, his *khurâki*, and other personal expenses, will be paid separately at the fixed rate of Rs. 20 a sardar."

Under these terms, one garden in Nowgong imported in 1884, 93 statute adults at a cost, including everything, of Rs. 55-13 per head landed at the Silghát depôt, and, calculating 7 annas as the expenditure during the two easy marches thence to the garden, the total cost to the garden was Rs. 56-4. On the other hand, the Labour-supply Association, composed of proprietors and agents, may be expected to work as cheaply as possible, and Mr. Driberg computes the cost of bringing up coolies to the same garden through their agency as only Rs. 40-2 per head. This would seem a reasonable cost, considering the many incidental expenses there are in the recruiting district and at depôts, all of which the planter has to bear. The Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet reports that the cost of importation into his district of sardari coolies, including both those who contract in the recruiting district, and those, known as free immigrants, who do not so contract, varies from Rs. 25 to Rs. 35, while contractors' coolies cost about Rs. 50, including everything, *i.e.*, fare, diet, and all charges.

In Cachar the managers of two important gardens give the cost of a sardari coolie at from Rs. 50 to Rs. 55, while contract coolies cost from Rs. 70 to Rs. 75.

It will thus be seen that the planters of the Surma Valley do not import their labourers any cheaper than those of the Assam Valley; and the conclusion to be drawn from this is that the planting community of the Surma Valley will not hesitate to utilise the proposed accelerated steamer service when it is started, which will not only save them much loss from mortality, but also save the cost of dieting their labourers during the three weeks that they are performing the boat journey from Goalundo.

Repatriation of labourers.

15. In July 1883 the Chief Commissioner addressed a letter to the Government of India, suggesting that the Labour Transport Fund should bear the difference between the cost of repatriation of invalided coolies whose contracts have been cancelled under Section 122, and the three months' wages to which they are entitled under the provisions of the Act, the difference to be calculated according to a scale submitted by the Chief Commissioner with that letter, and also that the same fund should bear the whole cost of repatriating incapacitated labourers who had no claim on their employers under Section 122. The Government of India, in Mr. Buck's letter No. 248E., of 7th November 1883, after remarking that it had been advised that, under Section 192 of the Emigration Act, the Inland Labour Transport Fund could not be legally appropriated in the manner proposed, added—

"Under these circumstances, the Government of India, while agreeing that the Fund might on general grounds be very properly devoted to assisting invalided labourers in returning to their homes, regrets its inability to sanction your proposals. The point will, however, be borne in mind should the Act hereafter come under revision."

This decision of the Government of India was subsequently (with Circular No. 37, of 9th August 1884) circulated to all Deputy-Commissioners, together with the calculation of the cost of repatriation forwarded to the Government of India with the Chief Commissioner's original letter, and inspecting officers were authorised never to give less than the three months' wages unless the cost of repatriation, as shown on that scale, came to a less sum. With regard to other incapacitated labourers, the circular continued—

"As regards disabled labourers, who, not being under contract, find their way to dispensaries and cannot pay the journey home, Mr. Elliott authorises the Deputy-Commissioners to pay the cost from their permanent advance, and to recover it by a bill submitted to the Comptroller in cases where the coolies can travel or can find an escort. Sometimes a sardar, going to recruit in the labourer's district, might be utilised to take him home, receiving a present for the trouble: or some other escort may be found. Unless, however, the labourer can state his home and aver that he has friends there who will support him, and unless he is fit to bear the journey, he should not be repatriated."

The result of the inability to supplement the three months' wages from the Labour Transport Fund has been seen (Section 11) in the case of Lakhimpur, where the Deputy-Commissioner has expressed himself loth to carry out the provisions of the Act as regards cancelling contracts at the depôt under Section 122, knowing, as he does, that the three months' wages that he awards the man are not sufficient to carry him home.

CHAPTER II.—Inspection.

Number of gardens included in the report.

1. In the Tea Report for 1884, lately submitted to the Government of India, the total number of gardens in the Province was given as 970, and the reasons for the diminution in the number returned in previous years were stated at length. The number of gardens treated of in the district immigration reports is 966 (exclusive of 8 in Goálpára and 1 in the Khási Hills maintained by local labour), so that there is an apparent discrepancy of 11 between the figures of the tea report and those given now. In Sibságar 3 and in Darrang 2 gardens have been nominally added, because amalgamated gardens, treated as one garden in the tea report, have been dealt with separately in the immigration report. In Lakhimpur two small patches of tea cultivation have been discovered and added to the register since the submission of the tea report. In Cachar, a new garden, opened out in August 1884, and omitted in the tea report, has been included in the report on immigration, and from Sylhet three gardens have been taken, which were found to be included in the revenue-rolls both of Sylhet and Cachar, although all their returns went to Silchar, from which place they were inspected. As pointed out in the tea report, there has been no material expansion or contraction of tea-planters' operations during the year.

Number of gardens submitting returns.

2. It was explained last year that the provincial report deals only with those gardens which under the rules are liable to send in the prescribed half-yearly returns, and this liability extends to all gardens except those employing local labourers residing in their own villages and not in coolie lines on the gardens. Out of 824 gardens so liable, 787 have complied with

the rules and sent in returns; of the remaining 37, 33 are very small patches of cultivation in Kámrúp with less than 50 labourers on them, and 4 are similar gardens in Lakhimpur described by the Deputy-Commissioner as "worked in a fitful manner with less than 20 Bengali free labourers or Assamese or Cachari coolies, who come and go as they please." No returns were demanded from these gardens, nor is it necessary to burden district officers with the task of getting returns of such labour forces as these. Some complaints are made of the inaccuracy of these returns, but they are becoming better understood, and time may be trusted to correct inaccuracies.

Classification of gardens submitting returns.

3. The following statement shows the number of gardens classified, district by district, according to the class and number of the labourers employed; the number which submitted returns; and the number which have been visited by inspecting officers.

	Sylhet.					Cachar.					Lakhimpur.				
	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.
Number of gardens	77	26	4	1	108	155	20	4	4	183	128	7	4	16	155
Ditto sending returns 50 and 51	77	26	4	...	107	155	20	4	...	179	128	7	...	...	135
Ditto inspected once	54	18	3	...	75	149	20	2	2	173	106	7	3	7	123
Ditto ditto twice	7	1	...	...	8	2	...	...	...	2	18	...	1	...	19
Ditto ditto thrice	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	4
Total number inspected	61	19	3	...	83	151	20	2	2	175	128	7	4	7	146
Number inspected in 1883	63	18	3	...	84	111	25	...	...	136	77	...	...	...	77

	Sibságar.					Nowgong.				
	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.
Number of gardens	155	10	12	58	235	34	14	9	13	70
Ditto sending returns 50 & 51	155	10	12	.....	177	34	14	9	.....	57
Ditto inspected once	88	6	3	9	106	34	8	1	5	48
Ditto ditto twice	10	.....	.....	1	11	.....	6	.....	.....	6
Ditto ditto thrice	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Total number inspected	98	6	3	10	117	34	14	1	5	54
Number inspected in 1883	122	7	12	.....	141	26	7	3	.....	36

	Darrang.					Kámrúp.					Total.				
	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.
Number of gardens	93	12	7	16	128	11	6	36	34	87	653	95	76	142	966
Ditto sending returns 50 & 51	93	12	7	...	112	11	6	3	...	20	653	95	39	...	787
Ditto inspected once	84	10	2	...	96	8	3	3	...	14	523	72	17	23	635
Ditto ditto twice	7	1	...	...	8	3	...	...	...	3	47	8	1	1	57
Ditto ditto thrice	2	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	6
Total number inspected	93	11	2	...	106	11	3	3	...	17	576	80	18	24	698
Number inspected in 1883	70	10	2	...	82	8	...	...	3	11	477	67	20	3	567

Inspection of Act gardens.

4. There has been a marked improvement in the number of inspections carried out by the various district officials, as the following statement and that given in the next paragraph show.

District.	Number of gardens employing Act labourers.		Number of such gardens inspected.		Number remaining uninspected.	
	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.
Sylhet	71	77	63	61	8	16
Cachar	141	155	111	151	30	4
Lakhimpur	116	128	77	128	39	...
Sibságar	147	155	122	98	25	57
Nowgong	30	34	26	34	4	...
Darrang	73	93	70	93	3	...
Kámrúp	12	11	8	11	4	...
Total	590	653	477	576	113	77

The districts of Sylhet and Sibságar are exceptions to the general improvement. In Sylhet failure to inspect occurred in the South Sylhet sub-division, and is attributed to the many changes of officers which occurred there. In Sibságar the failure occurred entirely in the sub-division of Jorhát, and the excuse given is that the sub-division was without a European officer from July to November. In last year's report the Chief Commissioner had to notice the frivolous excuse given by this officer for neglecting his inspection duties ; the explanation given above is, if possible, still more frivolous, because garden inspection work is not usually done in the rains.

In Lakhimpur, Nowgong, Darrang, and Kámrúp, every garden with Act labourers on it was brought under inspection.

Inspection of non-Act gardens.

5. The figures below compare the inspections of non-Act gardens for the past two years.

District.	Gardens employing imported labourers.		Number inspected in		Uninspected in					
					1883.			1884.		
	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	Over 50.	50 and under.	Total.	Over 50.	50 and under.	Total.
Sylhet	40	30	21	22	17	2	19	7	1	8
Cachar	38	24	25	22	10	3	13	...	2	2
Lakhimpur	45	11	...	11	5	40	45	...	...	...
Sibságar	33	22	19	9	5	9	14	4	9	13
Nowgong	17	23	10	15	2	5	7	...	8	8
Darrang	50	19	12	13	2	36	38	1	5	6
Kámrúp	1	42	...	6	...	1	1	3	33	36
Total	224	171	87	98	41	96	137	15	58	73

Only 15 non-Act gardens employing over 50 labourers were left uninspected, as compared with 41 in the previous year. As stated in last year's report, much stress is not laid upon the payment of visits to small gardens with only 50 free labourers or less.

CHAPTER III.

Statistics of the Year's Immigration.

Sources of immigration statistics.

The statistics given in the present report are based on the half-yearly returns submitted by garden managers which deal with the number of labourers imported during the year, whether free or by garden-sardars, or by contractors ; but, as pointed out in last year's report (Chapter III., paragraph 1), these statistics are defective in many ways, and can only be accepted as approximately correct.

Provincial figures

2. The returns for 1884 show a large increase in immigration, and the total number of immigrants, 45,511, exceeds that recorded for any previous year. The increase over 1883 is 13,373, or 41·61 per cent.; details are given below :—

		1	2	3	4
		1883.	1884.	Increase or decrease.	Per cent.
Act ...	Sardari adults ...	10,805	16,302	+5,497	50·87
	Contractors' adults ...	9,981	9,280	−701	−7·02
Non-Act ...	Adults ...	5,604	7,165	+1,561	27·85
	Children ...	5,748	12,764	+7,016	122·06
	Total ...	32,138	45,511	+13,373	41·61

This statement shows a large expansion in the operations of garden-sardars and a decrease in contractors' operations. The large increase in the importation of children is a natural consequence of the increase in importations by garden-sardars, who are more successful than contractors in inducing whole families to emigrate. The great increase in the number of almost all kinds of immigrants is differently accounted for by different Deputy-Commissioners, and the matter has already been touched upon in the Tea Report. The most likely explanation is one given by an experienced manager in Cachar, who says—

"The principal reason for the increase in the number of imported coolies in 1884 over 1883 is that prices in 1882 averaging 8 annas 8 pie only in Calcutta, most gardens paid nothing, and could not afford to import any fresh labour at the end of the year. In 1883 prices averaged 9 annas 10 pie, most gardens paid a dividend, and thought they could afford to increase their labour force. Similarly, prices in Calcutta having been only 8 annas 9 pie on an average for the crop of 1884, fewer coolies are being imported for this season's operations."

A portion of the increase may also be attributed to the scarcity which prevailed in some of the recruiting districts in 1883.

District and valley statistics.

3. The following figures give the statistics of immigration for the two valleys and each district separately:—

District.	Act.			Non-Act. Adults.			Non-Act. Children.			Total.		
	1883.	1884.	Percentage, increase or decrease.	1883.	1884.	Percentage, increase or decrease.	1883.	1884.	Percentage, increase.	1883.	1884.	Percentage, increase.
Sylhet	3,578	3,212	−10·28	3,100	3,355	8·22	1,204	2,845	136·29	7,882	9,412	19·28
Cachar	3,319	4,447	+33·98	1,542	1,779	15·36	1,093	2,430	122·32	5,954	8,656	43·36
Total Surma Valley	6,897	7,659	+11·04	4,642	5,134	10·59	2,297	5,275	129·64	13,836	18,068	30·58
Lakhimpur	6,833	6,580	−3·7	519	603	16 18	1,158	2,116	82·72	8,510	9,299	9·27
Sibságar	4,008	6,824	+20·35	199	349	75·37	1,211	3,265	169·61	5,418	10,438	92·65
Nowgong	1,136	1,311	+15·4	86	579	573·25	458	785	71·39	1,680	2,675	53·27
Darrang	1,766	3,004	+70·1	98	443	352·04	568	1,177	107·21	2,432	4,624	90·54
Kámrúp	146	204	+39·72	60	57	−5·	56	146	171·41	262	407	55·34
Total Assam Valley	13,889	17,923	+29·04	962	2,031	111·12	3,451	7,489	117·	18,302	27,443	47·75
Grand Total	20,786	25,582	+23·07	5,604	7,165	27·85	5,748	12,764	121·88	32,138	45,511	41·61

In 1883 the order of precedence among the chief importing districts was Lakhimpur, Sylhet, Cachar, Sibságar, but this year Sibságar heads the list with over 10,000 immigrants, Sylhet comes second, with Lakhimpur close behind, and Cachar stands fourth. Lakhimpur and Sylhet are the only two districts which show a decrease in the number of Act coolies. In only two districts has the increase in the number of child immigrants been less than 100 per cent.; the increase of 19 per cent. in the total immigrants to Sylhet is wholly due to the increase in the number of children imported.

In 1883 the Surma Valley showed the largest increase in immigration; last year the Assam Valley shows an increase of 9,141 immigrants, or 49 per cent., as compared with an increase of 4,232, or 30 per cent., in the Surma Valley.

Nationality of immigrants.

4. The comparative table below shows the adult immigrants according to their sex and country of origin, divided also into their classes as Act coolies (contractors' or sardari) and non-Act coolies.

Nationality.		Act.				Non-Act.		Total.	
		Garden-sardars.		Contractors.					
		1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Bengal	Men	1,038	1,869	1,380	1,474	354	760	2,772	4,103
	Women	864	1,585	1,162	1,346	307	702	2,333	3,633
Total		1,902	3,454	2,542	2,820	661	1,462	5,105	7,736
North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	Men	1,591	2,010	2,284	466	2,147	2,216	6,022	4,692
	Women	866	1,242	650	344	1,053	1,255	2,569	2,841
Total		2,457	3,252	2,934	810	3,200	3,471	8,591	7,533
Chota Nagpur	Men	3,655	5,343	2,861	3,185	657	906	7,173	9,434
	Women	2,452	4,163	1,462	2,442	490	756	4,404	7,361
Total		6,107	9,506	4,323	5,627	1,147	1,662	11,577	16,795
Nepal	Men	17	.....	78	1	21	7	116	8
	Women	4	.....	32	.....	4	5	40	5
Total		21	.....	110	1	25	12	156	13
Madras	Men	15	24	21	6	229	76	265	106
	Women	4	18	9	2	92	92	105	112
Total		19	42	30	8	321	168	370	218
Bombay	Men	182	19	8	9	12	6	202	34
	Women	104	11	3	5	11	3	118	19
Total		286	30	11	14	23	9	320	53
Assam	Men	13	18	31	.....	196	316	240	334
	Women	.....	.....	.....	.....	31	65	31	65
Total		13	18	31	.....	227	381	271	399
Total	Men	6,511	9,283	6,663	5,141	3,616	4,287	16,790	18,711
	Women	4,294	7,019	3,318	4,139	1,988	2,878	9,600	14,036
Grand Total		10,805	16,302	9,981	9,280	5,604	7,165	26,390	32,747

These figures show a large increase in the immigration from Chota Nagpur and Bengal, and a decrease from the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar, contractors only bringing down 810 from the last named provinces, as against 2,934 brought by them in 1883. Nepal, Madras, and Bombay also contributed fewer coolies to the labour force, but the Assamese would seem to be turning to tea-garden work more readily than in former years.

It is worthy of note that the number of women immigrants in 1884 bear a proportion of 42·86 per cent. to the total adult immigrants, whereas in 1883 the proportion was only 36·37 per cent. The following figures give the proportion of women to men among the three classes of coolies from the three main recruiting districts.

Locality of recruitment.	Percentage of women to men among			
	Sardari.	Contractors.	Non-Act.	All adult immigrants.
Bengal	45·88	47·73	48·01	46·96
North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	38·19	42·46	36·15	37·71
Chota Nagpur	43·79	43 39	45·48	43·82
Total	43·05	44·6	40·16	42·86

This increase in the proportion of women to men, when taken with the large increase in the number of child immigrants, shows that more whole families are being imported, which is a satisfactory sign from the employer's point of view, as he is sure of his lines being kept better, and his coolies being more contented and remaining longer on his garden, than when labourers come up singly and have no family ties.

Contractors' and sardari labourers.

5. The table below gives the number of sardari and contractors' coolies imported into each district during the past two years, with the number of sardars' certificates granted, and the average number imported by each sardar.

District.	Sardari.		Number of certificates granted to garden-sardars.	Average recruits per sardar.	Contractors.	
	1883.	1884.	1884.	1884.	1883.	1884.
Sylhet	1,076	1,539	420	3·66	2,502	1,673
Cachar	2,286	3,426	428	8·	1,033	1,021
Total of Surma Valley ...	3,362	4,965	848	5·85	3,535	2,694
Lakhimpur	2,768	3,060	455	6·72	4,065	3,520
Sibságar	2,626	5,293	575	9·20	1,382	1,531
Nowgong	723	814	78	10·43	413	497
Darrang	1,191	2,003	308	6·50	575	1,001
Kámrúp	135	167	15	11·13	11	37
Total of Assam Valley ...	7,443	11,337	1,431	7·92	6,446	6,586
Grand Total ...	10,805	16,302	2,279	7·15	9,981	9,280

The figures in columns 3 and 4 of the above table give only approximate results, as the sardars whose certificates are granted at the end of the year do not return till the beginning of the next. Thus, in Cachar in 1883 some 630 certificates were granted to sardars, of whom many probably only returned in 1884 with coolies who are counted as immigrants of 1884, and the great decrease in the issue of certificates in 1884 (428 only) foreshadowed the decrease in the number of immigrants during the early months of 1885, which is known to have taken place.

As was the case in 1883, more contractors' than sardari coolies were imported last year into Sylhet and Lakhimpur. As noted last year, coolies are returned as contractors' coolies in the Assam Valley who are really brought to Dhubri as free immigrants, but are there put by contractors under local contract.

On the importation of free immigrants by garden-sardars in contravention of the law, the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet remarks that a few prosecutions seem to have had a deterrent effect; but he quotes the following illegal procedure from the report submitted by the sub-divisional officer of Karimganj:—

"I discovered at least one instance during the year where there was never the smallest intention of putting the coolie registered under Section 66 on contract under the Act, even after arrival on the garden. This is a clever, though I think a clear, evasion of the law. By registering the coolie, the sardar escapes prosecution under Section 151 for taking unregistered coolies from the district of recruitment, while he has enjoyed such facilities for recruiting and countenance of the district

authorities as may be derived from his holding a sardar's certificate granted by a Government officer. He gains this hold over the coolie, that the latter no doubt imagines that the formalities of registration are an equivalent to an agreement. The sardar, on the other hand, being not in charge of labourers, is freed from all the requirements of the law as to way-bills and inspections *en route*, and he also avoids the delay and expense of putting his coolies on agreement.

"The law provides, under Section 69, a punishment for a sardar acting thus, but the penalty being enforceable only by the registering officer, it is, of course, a dead letter."

Comparison of garden returns for the Assam Valley with Dhubri Immigration Report.

6. Reasons were given in paragraph 8 of Chapter III. of last year's report why little information of value can be obtained from a comparison of the returns sent in by garden managers for gardens in the Assam Valley with the figures given by the Deputy-Commissioner of Goálpára in his Report on Immigration *viâ* Dhubri. The reasons are chiefly these—(1) the basis of calculation is different, the garden returns dividing all immigrants into Act labourers, non-Act labourers, and children, while the Dhubri report divides them into sardari, contractors' and free coolies and dependents; (2) dependents not being specially included in garden returns, many are probably left out; (3) many immigrants put under local contract at Dhubri are returned as locally contracted by managers, and not classed as immigrants at all. The figures, however, of the Dhubri immigration report are given below:—

Garden returns of the Assam Valley.

Act labourers	Sardari	11,337
	Contractors'	6,586
Non-Act labourers		2,031
Children		7,489
	Total	27,443

Dhubri immigration return, showing immigrants

	Viâ Dhubri.	*Viâ* Goalundo.	Total.
Sardari	7,857	427	8,284
Contractors'	7,863	2,461	10,324
Free	321	.....	321
Dependent	9,999	.....	9,999
	26,040	2,888	28,928

Comparison of the garden returns of the Surma Valley with the Goalundo Immigration Report.

7. The figures given below compare the garden returns of the Surma Valley with the report of the Superintendent of Emigration at Goalundo, but it has already been shown above (Chapter I., paragraph 3) that so many immigrants elude the depôt at Goalundo, that no inference against

managers' returns can be drawn from the difference in the figures obtained from these two sources of information.

Garden returns of the Surma Valley.

Act labourers.	Sardari	4,965
	Contractors'	2,694
Non-Act labourers		5,134
Children		5,275
	Total	18,068

Report of the Superintendent of Emigration at Goalundo.

Sardari coolies and dependents	9,492
Contractors' coolies	2,728
Contractors' dependents	1,047
	13,267

It will be seen from the above that, while the statistics for contractors' coolies show close agreement, the figures for sardari coolies, many of whom do not report themselves at Goalundo, differ widely.

Mortality *en route* in the Surma Valley.

8. Reliable statistics are not forthcoming of the mortality among labourers *en route* for gardens in Sylhet. Such statistics are only procurable from the way-bills of the garden-sardars and others who accompany the labourers to the gardens; these way-bills should be shown to all officers and at all places indicated thereon (Section 76 of the Act), and a penalty attaches if they are not so presented. But, as already pointed out, labourers for the Sylhet gardens are landed at no fixed places *en route*, and the way-bills are often seen by no one after they are issued until they are presented to the employer. Accordingly, the figures that are given by the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet for the past year 1884 relate only to such batches of coolies as called at the sadr depôt, which is off the main line, or to the very few batches that disembarked at Karimganj, and are consequently of but little value.

On the other hand, the following figures for the Cachar district, taken from the registers kept at the Katigora and Silchar depôts, are much fuller and give a much clearer insight into the terrible mortality that occurs during this journey.

Year.	Number despatched from recruiting district.*	Deaths.		Total.	Annual ratio per mille.
		En route.	In hospital.		
1882	3,380	106	29	135	39·9
1883	3,039	126	23	149	49
1884	5,013	376	101	477	95·2

* This column shows only those batches who disembarked or who reported themselves at the Katigora and Silchar depôts.

Thus, the mortality rate *en route* in 1884 is nearly double that of 1883. The best remedy for this deplorable state of affairs is, as has been already stated, to establish a fast line of steamers from Narainganj or Goalundo, and the officiating Chief Commissioner trusts that the Government of India will agree with him in thinking that no time should be lost in bringing about this very necessary and urgent reform. It should be explained that the annual mortality rate shown above is based on the calculation that the average length of a journey by boat from Goalundo to Cachar is one month (*see* Chapter III., paragraph 11 of last year's report).

CHAPTER IV.—Local Labour Contracts.

Number of local contracts made.

There were 24,333 local contracts under Section 111 and 1,124 under Section 112 concluded in 1884, as compared with 26,983 under Section 111 and 999 under Section 112 in 1883. The Report on Immigration *viâ* Dhubri shows that 7,883 labourers contracted under these two sections on their arrival there. Sylhet and Lakhimpur are mainly responsible for the decrease in the number of local contracts.

Nationality of labourers making local contracts.

2. The following table shows the nationality of labourers entering on local contracts. There was a considerable decrease in the number of Chota Nagpur labourers and an increase in those coming from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh who thus contracted:—

District.	Sex.	Contracted under Section 111.	Contracted under Section 112.	Particulars of columns 3 and 4 by nationality.							
				Bengal.	North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	Chota Nagpur.	Nepal.	Madras.	Bombay.	Assam.	Total of cols. 3 and 4.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Sylhet	Men ...	1,064	20	245	729	110	...	...	...	...	1,084
	Women ...	648	6	151	375	128	...	...	...	...	654
	No details...	(a)102	...	...	.....	.....	...	...	...	...	102
	Total 1884...	1,814	26	396	1,104	238	...	...	...	...	1,840
	„ 1883...	2,318	116	404	1,393	497	...	136	...	4	2,434
Cachar	Men ...	4,085	55	1,345	1,551	1,203	1	24	10	6	4,140
	Women ...	3,121	13	1,415	851	839	...	11	8	10	3,134
	Total 1884...	7,206	68	2,760	2,402	2,042	1	35	18	16	7,274
	„ 1883...	5,694	38	2,262	1,701	1,734	1	...	7	27	5,732
Lakhimpur	Men ...	773	339	74	64	875	...	3	...	96	1,112
	Women ...	420	220	93	48	496	...	2	...	1	640
	Total 1884...	1,193	559	167	112	1,371	...	5	...	97	1,752
	„ 1883...	4,000	248	372	411	3,096	4	14	...	351	4,248
Sibságar	Men ...	5,909	...	1,040	711	2,652	1	18	...	1,487	5,909
	Women ..	3,727	...	892	549	2,091	...	11	...	184	3,727
	No details...	(b)1,164	...	...	.....	.....	...	...	...	...	1,164
	Total 1884...	10,800	...	1,932	1,260	4,743	1	29	...	1,671	10,800
	„ 1883...	11,885	...	2,421	1,311	5,714	...	48	...	1,696	11,885

Details of local contracts.

3. The following table gives some general information as to these local contracts, of the classes who entered into them, their term, and how many were verified and how many cancelled :—

Districts.	Section 111.	Section 112.	Classes of labourers.				Number of years.						Verified.	Cancelled.
			New.	Time-expired.	Old Act coolies transferred	Local.	Under 1 year.	1	2	3	4	5		
Sylhet	1,814(a)	26	1,055	785	....	....	....	806(c)	176	811(d)	2	45	812	30
Cachar	7,206	68	1,235	6,033	....	6	....	4,282	1,788	969	54	231	3,960	....
Lakhimpur	1,198	559	35	1,715	....	2	....	1,370	154	140	24	64	480	87
Sibságar	10,800(b)	....	1,750	7,798	....	1,252	....	4,434	2,197	3,804	108	757	1,738	....
Nowgong	38	4	....	35	2	....	....	33	2	....	2	....	4	....
Darrang	3,199	421	....	3,095	....	525	11	2,778	435	368	11	17	2,458	....
Kámrúp	88	46	73	45	....	16	....	25	1	103	....	5	40	....
Total ..	24,333	1,124	4,148	19,506	2	1,801	11	13,728	4,703	5,695	201	1,119	9,492	117

(a) See explanation at foot of table above, paragraph 2.
(b) " " " " in paragraph 2.
(c) Five for one year and three months.
(d) Six for two years and eleven months.

It is clear that the above figures do not include, as they should have done, new contracts executed at Dhubri. They probably show only contracts executed on gardens. The Dhubri Immigration Report for 1884 shows that out of a total of 7,883 local contracts executed at Dhubri, 6,032 were executed for five years, whereas only 1,851 were executed for three years, the corresponding figures for the year 1883 being 2,777 and 4,292 respectively.

The statement given in last year's report contained much imperfect information, so that a detailed comparison of figures would be misleading. Taking, however, the figures of the five districts that submitted complete returns last year (Sylhet, Cachar, Sibságar, Nowgong, and Kámrúp), we find that there were 1,204 contracts for four or five years concluded on gardens in 1884, as compared with 840 only in 1883. The number of three-year contracts also have increased. In three of the largest districts (Sylhet, Cachar, and Sibságar) there have been more newly-imported coolies put under local contracts than in former years. In Lakhimpur no less than 84 contracts were cancelled, because the employer refused to allow them to be verified. Of those cancelled in Sylhet, two were annulled on account of "undue influence," one because the labourer was a minor, one for unfitness, and 26 by mutual consent. Thus, 110 out of the total number cancelled were either cancelled by mutual consent, or as a punishment on a manager for transgressing the rules.

The falling off in the number of verifications in Sibságar is on a par with the failure of that district in inspection work. This work seems to be fairly looked after in Cachar, where more than half the local contracts were verified, and very well attended to in Darrang; it was much neglected by the officers of other districts.

Terms of local contracts.

4. In the course of the year 1884 the Chief Commissioner issued the following Circular Order (No. 48 of 19th September 1884) to all Deputy-Commissioners of tea districts on the subject of the way in which the terms of local contracts should be expressed.

5. The opinions of some of the district officers on the relative efficiency of local contracts under Act I. of 1882, and those made under Act XIII. of 1859 may here be quoted.

Act XIII. of 1859.

The Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur says—

"So long as Act XIII. of 1859 remains in force in the district, I apprehend that the number of contracts under Section 111 will not increase. It is surprising to me that any contracts at all should be given under Section 111, while the abovementioned Act is in force. In cases of desertion the employer can generally obtain process and an order from the Magistrate against the coolie to perform his contract, and the coolie may at the same time be ordered to furnish security, in default of which he may be sent to jail. The procedure is just as expeditious as in the case of a complaint under Act I., and the order of the court to work out a specific contract under pain of punishment is as effective a method of getting work done as the imprisonment of a coolie and the addition to his contract of the days of absence or desertion. Considering that absolutely no use is made by employers of the sections of Act I. of 1882 which enable them to add on days of unlawful absence or of absence on account of sickness to a coolie's contract, and that there are no other advantages which this form of contract possesses over any other, while it imposes many duties of what the employers consider to be of an irksome kind, I have never been able to understand how Section 111 can live alongside of Act XIII. of 1859."

The Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar writes—

"Act XIII. of 1859 is still largely used; some small native gardens use no other form of contract, and several managers, when the verification of local contracts was insisted on, declared that they would resort to the 'simple plan' of putting their coolies under 'the good old rule' of Act XIII. * * Act XIII. is, I venture to think, not an enactment which should rule contracts between tea planters and their labourers. Where it is applied to cases of job work, and the employer is allowed the option of deciding whether he shall have his job completed or his more or less equivalent advance returned him, the procedure of the Act is fair enough; but here the coolie is never allowed to refund the so-called advance, the whole pound of flesh is rigorously exacted, and the coolie has to go back to the garden, even if he offers, as I have known him offer, to pay a larger sum than the advance claimed, and the job claimed is an apprenticeship of a year's duration in an unhealthy climate for which the so-called advance is a very imperfect consideration. If an alternative to Act I. be really necessary, I would recommend a short law allowing the coolie to elect whether he shall, after due notice given to the employer, return to his work or repay all expenses incurred on his account by his employer and all loss undergone in replacing him."

CHAPTER V.—Labour Force.

The following table is an abstract of the statement at the end of the report, which deals with the full details of the provincial labour force, and shows roughly the additions and deductions which have been made in that force during the year 1884:—

Statistics of the labour force.

Labour force at the beginning of 1884	.....	239,273
Additions—		
Immigrants	45,511	
Local labour contracts	24,191	
Re-engaged on expiry of contract	20,630	
Transferred from other gardens	9,766	
Births	8,629	
Otherwise (labourers changing their gardens, deserters, &c.)	26,622	
Deserters recaptured, or men returned from imprisonment.	386	
Total	.....	135,735
Deductions—		
Left with permission or on expiry of contract ...	54,930	
Transferred to other gardens	6,918	
Free labourers put under local contract	15,196	
Deaths	11,583	
Desertions	9,855	
Cancelled under Sections 111, 140, or 177	39	
Ditto ditto Section 122	356	
Redeemed	48	
Dissolved by mutual consent	4	
Total	.....	98,929
Total increase during the year	.....	36,806
Grand total at close of year	.....	276,079

2. The usual statement is given below showing the total labour force at the beginning and end of the last three years, and also the mean strength for the two half-years of 1884.

Mean strength of the labour force.

Class of labourers.	1st January 1882.	1st January 1883.	1st January 1884.	1st July 1884.	Mean strength for first half-year of 1884.	31st December 1884.	Mean strength for second half-year of 1884.
Act adults.....	28,257	41,918	67,262	86,028	76,645	83,626	84,827
Non-Act { Adults...	95,684	97,426	91,727	99,307	95,517	97,205	98,256
Non-Act { Children	64,804	70,842	80,284	92,701	86,492	95,248	93,974
Total	188,745	210,186	239,273	278,036	258,654	276,079	277,057

Large importations in the first six months of 1884 raised the numbers of coolies composing the labour force by nearly 40,000 within that period; in the subsequent six months there was a reduction in the force of nearly 2,000. This foreshadows a contraction, which there is reason to believe is now taking place, in the labour force in 1885. The number of Act coolies has increased by 16,364 in 1884, as compared with an increase of 25,281 in 1883; non-Act adults have increased by 5,478 and children by 14,964, as compared with a decrease of 7,003 and an increase of 8,940 respectively in the previous year.

The proportions of each of the three classes to the mean labour force were in 1883, Act coolies 25·7 per cent., non-Act adults 41·1 per cent., children 33·1 per cent. In 1884 the figures were Act coolies 30·1 per cent., non-Act adults 36·1 per cent., children 33·6 per cent. In December 1883, 42·7 per cent. of the adults were women, and the percentage in December 1884 was 43·2.

District figures of the labour force.

3. The details of each district, with the proportion that the labour force of each district bears to the total labour force of the province, are given below.

	1st January 1884.	31st December 1884.	Percentage of total provincial force.	Increase.	Per cent.
Sylhet	36,114	45,707	16·6	9,593	26·5
Cachar	73,735	81,137	29·4	7,402	10·0
Total of Surma Valley ...	109,849	126,844	46·0	16,995	15·4
Lakhimpur ...	40,703	46,621	16·9	5,918	14·5
Sibságar	56,579	64,313	23·3	7,734	13·6
Nowgong	9,696	11,438	4·1	1,742	17·9
Darrang	20,432	24,144	8·7	3,712	18·1
Kámrúp	2,014	2,719	1·0	705	35·0
Total Assam Valley ...	129,424	149,235	54·0	19,811	15·3
Grand Total ...	239,273	276,079	100·0	36,806	15·3

The increase of the year has been evenly distributed between the two valleys. From column 3 it is seen that the Surma Valley employs 46 per cent. of the total labour force, and that Cachar alone employs 29 per cent. Sibságar comes next, with 23 per cent., and Lakhimpur and Sylhet employ very nearly exactly the same proportion, 16 per cent. The percentage of increase is greatest in Sylhet, as extensive gardens are still being opened out in the south of that district, and least in Cachar, in which district there is, however, a greater increase per cent. than in 1883.

Nationality of the adult labour force.

4. The following statement shows the nationality and sex of the adult labour force at the beginning and end of 1884.

Nationality.	Sex.	Act.		Non-Act.		Total.		Ratio of each nationality.
		1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	
Bengal	Men ...	8,443	10,656	14,216	14,892	22,659	25,548	27·2
	Women.	7,945	10,351	12,618	13,244	20,563	23,595	
North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	Men ...	9,113	10,132	11,036	12,436	20,149	22,568	21·6
	Women.	4,722	5,987	9,586	10,450	14,308	16,437	
Chota Nagpur	Men ...	19,416	24,667	20,147	20,516	39,563	45,183	44·7
	Women.	13,563	17,787	17,398	17,941	30,961	35,728	
Nepal	Men ...	65	72	193	65	258	137	0·1
	Women.	32	25	32	45	64	70	
Madras	Men ...	397	274	403	437	800	711	0·7
	Women.	219	184	280	338	499	522	
Bombay	Men ...	231	196	13	32	244	228	0·2
	Women.	128	134	11	31	139	165	
Assam	Men ...	2,494	2,557	4,940	5,625	7,434	8,182	5·5
	Women.	494	604	854	1,153	1,348	1,757	
Total	Men ...	40,159	48,554	50,948	54,003	91,107	102,557	
	Women.	27,103	35,072	40,779	43,202	67,882	78,274	
Grand Total	.....	67,262	83,626	91,727	97,205	158,989	180,831	

There is practically no change in the proportions in which the members of the above nationalities constitute the labour force of Assam. The following figures show the proportion of Act and non-Act and of all coolies belonging to each nationality.

	1883. Total.	1884. Act labourers.	1884. Non-Act.	1884. Total.
Bengal	27·2	25·1	29·	27·2
North-Western Provinces	21·8	19·3	23·5	21·6
Chota Nagpur	44·6	50·8	39·6	44·7
Nepal	0·2	0·1	0·1	0·1
Madras	0·8	0·5	0·9	0·7
Bombay	0·2	0·4	0·1	0·2
Assam	5·2	3·8	6·8	5·5
Total	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0

5. The following figures give the total annual strength, *i.e.*, the mean strength, in each district for each half-year, and for the whole year. On these figures the half-yearly and annual percentages of mortality and desertions are calculated.

Mean strength in each district.

District.	Act.			Non-Act.						Total annual strength.		
				Adults.			Children.					
	First half.	Second half.	Annual mean.	First half.	Second half.	Annual mean.	First half.	Second half.	Annual mean.	First half.	Second half.	Annual mean.
Sylhet ...	8,028	8,774	8,401	19,913	21,987	20,950	12,870	14,845	13,857	40,811	45,607	43,209
Cachar ...	15,818	18,025	16,921	29,646	29,472	29,559	31,953	33,622	32,787	77,418	81,119	79,268
Lakhimpur	16,551	17,098	16,824	14,833	16,073	15,453	12,203	13,375	12,789	43,587	46,546	45,066
Sibságar...	25,233	28,238	26,735	16,083	15,128	15,605	19,744	21,561	20,652	61,060	64,927	62,993
Nowgong..	2,511	2,665	2,588	5,234	5,672	5,453	3,135	3,414	3,274	10,881	11,752	11,316
Darrang...	7,938	9,430	8,684	8,761	8,670	8,715	5,831	6,286	6,058	22,530	24,386	23,458
Kámrúp...	564	595	579	1,046	1,253	1,149	755	869	812	2,366	2,718	2,542
Total...	76,645	84,827	80,736	95,517	98,256	96,886	86,492	93,974	90,233	258,654	277,057	267,855

CHAPTER VI.—DESERTIONS.

The total number of deserters, including children who went with their parents, was 9,855 in 1884, as compared with 8,377 in 1883. The figures for adult deserters, district by district, for the past two years are given below.

Provincial and district figures.

District.	Total desertions among adults.		Act.		Non-Act.		Percentage of desertions on annual strength among					
							Act.		Non-Act.		Total adult population.	
	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.
Sylhet	2,622	2,874	974	1,271	1,648	1,603	18·70	15·20	9·19	7·33	11·36	9·83
Cachar	1,563	2,390	594	960	969	1,430	5·10	5·69	3·17	4·83	3·72	5·14
Lakhimpur	1,298	1,097	1,075	700	223	397	7·20	4·16	1·55	2·54	4·41	3·39
Sibságar	994	1,145	633	745	361	400	3·45	2·77	1·95	2·55	2·68	2·70
Nowgong	307	396	169	177	138	219	7·65	6·85	3·68	4 0	5·32	4·92
Darrang	490	657	198	283	292	374	3·37	3·30	3·25	4·27	3·28	3·80
Kámrúp	217	117	19	52	198	65	4·51	8 91	21·35	5·90	15·90	6·85
Total	7,491	8,676	3,662	4,188	3,829	4,488	6·25	5·20	4·04	4·62	4·87	4·88

The figures for Kámrúp are too small to call for notice. In other districts the percentage of Act deserters has fallen everywhere except in Cachar. The large percentage of Act deserters in Sylhet still contributes to heighten the figure for the province, but it is satisfactory to note that that figure has fallen in 1884 to 5·20 from 6·25 in 1883. Sylhet is the only district in which there were fewer non-Act deserters in 1884 than in 1883, in the other districts there have been more desertions than usual among coolies of this class; the term "desertion," however, is a loose and undefined term when applied to a non-Act coolie. The total percentage of deserters in Sylhet is 9·83, which, although a reduction on last year's figure, is still very high, but the Deputy-Commissioner has not given any particular information on the subject in his report.

2. The following table shows the nationality and sex of the deserters. The number of women deserters has risen from 1,716 to 2,332, or from 2·60 per cent. to 3·06. It is only among the Bengal coolies that the number of women deserting shows a near approach to the number of male

Nationality and sex of deserters.

deserters, but the largest percentage of women is found among the North-Western Provinces coolies.

Nationality.	Sex.	Number of desertions.				Total.		Percentage of desertions on annual strength among					
		Act.		Non-Act.				Act.		Non-Act.		Total.	
		1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.
Bengal	Men	545	658	639	650	1,184	1,308	7·50	6·54	4·21	4·42	4·24	4·31
	Women	172	255	454	490	626	745	2·51	2·64	3·39	3·73		
North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	Men	1,293	1,264	947	1,118	2,240	2,382	16·99	12·18	8·36	9·19	8·48	8·26
	Women	140	240	417	575	557	815	3·38	4·08	4·25	5·62		
Chota Nagpur	Men	1,045	1,108	532	567	1,577	1,675	6·01	4·71	2·50	2·73	2·91	2·91
	Women	178	259	252	373	430	632	1·47	1·52	1·38	2·07		
Nepal	Men	28	47	15	21	43	68	50·07	56·62	7·81	14·09	16·78	27·39
	Women	4	12	2	3	6	15	17·39	34·28	5·41	8·33		
Madras	Men	43	111	149	13	192	124	12·58	28·17	35·83	3·07	20·10	13·39
	Women	8	46	45	10	53	56	4·29	21·39	16·37	3·20		
Bombay	Men	20	44	...	2	20	46	14·17	20·46	...	9·52	9·02	12·33
	Women	2	4	...	1	2	5	1·80	2 98	...	5·26		
Assam	Men	179	135	340	606	519	741	8 20	5·30	8·73	10·20	7·71	8·01
	Women	5	5	37	59	42	64	1·04	0·91	5·74	5·73		
Total	Men	3,153	3,367	2,622	2,977	5,775	6,344	9·01	7·12	5·01	5·49	6·59	5·25
	Women	509	821	1,207	1,511	1,716	2,332	2·13	2·14	2·85	3·53	2·60	3·06
Grand Total	.....	3,662	4,188	3,829	4,488	7,491	8,676	6·25	5·20	4·04	4·62	4·87	4·88

As was the case last year, the North-Western Provinces coolies are the most frequent runaways, those provinces contributing no less than 2,382 to the total of 8,676 deserters. It is satisfactory to note that the percentage of desertions among the Chota Nagpur coolies, considered by many managers to be the mainstay of their labour force, is as low as 2·91.

3. The district reports are not so full as last year on the subject of desertions. The district reports on desertions. The Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet offers no remarks.

The Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar, after giving the figures for his district, says—

"The reason of this increase in desertion is that the tea cultivation in Sylhet has largely increased during the past two years, and several new gardens have been opened in the South Sylhet and Karimganj sub-divisions, which demanded a large supply of labour, and the coolies of this district have been in large numbers enticed away with bonuses to that district by the recruiters.

"Secondly, the gardens in the Upper Assam districts are so scattered that in some cases it takes more than one day's journey to reach one from another, and the mode of communication, on the other hand, is so difficult that a coolie cannot easily run away if he wishes, whereas in Cachar the gardens are so closely situated and communication so easy that a coolie of a tea-garden in Cachar finds no difficulty whatever in deserting from his master's garden and taking fresh employment in another.

"Thirdly, as a fact, the deaths and desertions are generally very great among the new coolies, and as the importation for 1884 was very large, this is also one of the reasons why the desertion rate was so high in 1884."

In Darrang there were 374 adult deserters among non-Act coolies, of whom no less than 233 were Assamese; of these the Deputy-Commissioner remarks:—

"The majority of these men only work during the time they have no crops to look after, and leave when they like. Their services are not depended upon at all, seeing that they cannot be had when they are most needed, *viz.*, in the rains, but they are useful to the planter in the cold weather for building purposes, and their services are largely utilised in this direction. * * *

* * The two Tea Associations of Bisnath and Tezpur exist but in name only; in the former there was no Secretary during the last year, and in the latter no meetings were held, but as far as both are concerned, the members of each Association do not take on coolies belonging to other gardens in their district. In Mangaldai there is now no Association."

The Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar says—

"I cannot think that the manager's explanations of the causes of desertion are very probable. I know of no instance in which desertion was due to harsh treatment. On the other hand, when gardens are unhealthy and remote from bázárs, desertions must be expected, and in so large a labour district coolies will often try to better their positions by a migration from one garden to another.

More than one manager has informed me of the recent arrival on his garden of new coolies announcing themselves as free immigrants. I have not mentioned this fact in what would seem to be its appropriate place, because I have little doubt that such coolies are not new immigrants, but deserters. For the rest, it is difficult to suggest any general cause for desertions, which are usually due to personal and private reasons. Home sickness can rarely lead to desertions, for the coolies that make their way out of Assam are but few in number in proportion to the whole labour force."

CHAPTER VII.—MORTALITY ON GARDENS.

Increase in the death rate for the year

The Officiating Chief Commissioner regrets having to report a further increase in the mortality rate on tea-gardens during the past year. It was noticed in the report for 1883 that the death-rate, which had followed a downward curve from 1878 to 1881, began to rise in 1882, when it was 37·8 per mille. In 1883 there was a further rise to 41·3 per mille, and in the past year it has again risen to 43·2 per mille.

Death-rate for each district.

2. The statistics of mortality in each district for each half-year separately are given in the table below, where they are compared with the corresponding figures for 1883.

Districts.	Deaths among all classes of labourers, including children.						Ratio of deaths per mille.					
							Half-yearly				Annual.	
	First half year		Second half-year.		Total.		First half.		Second half.			
	1883	1884.	1883	1884	1883	1884	1883	1884	1883	1884.	1883.	1884
Sylhet	522	882	937	963	1 459	1,845	16 7	21 6	26 3	21 1	43 0	42 7
Cachar	1,017	1,430	1,068	1 230	2 085	2,660	14 5	18 4	14 6	15 2	29 1	33 6
Lakhimpur	962	898	1,063	1,041	2,025	1,939	24 3	20 6	25 6	22 3	49 9	42 9
Sibságar	928	1,445	1,350	1 645	2,273	3,090	17 6	23 6	24·2	25 3	41 8	48 9
Nowgong	281	344	308	346	589	690	35 7	31 6	35 7	29 4	71 4	61 0
Darrang	499	584	506	601	1,005	1,185	25 5	25 9	24 8	24 6	50 3	50 5
Kámrup	46	103	53	71	99	174	23 0	43 5	27·0	26 1	50 0	69·6
Total	4,250	5,686	5,285	5,897	9,535	11,583	19 0	21 9	22 3	21 3	41 3	43 2

It will be seen that, unlike the year 1883, the mortality was divided equally between the two half-years.

Lakhimpur is the only district in which there were fewer deaths in 1884 than in 1883. The ratio per mille has increased in Cachar, Sibságar, Darrang, and Kámrúp, shows a slight decrease in Sylhet and a large decrease in Lakhimpur and Nowgong. Cachar and Sibságar, employing, as they do, no less than 52 per cent. of the total labour force of the province, influence the provincial mortality figures most prejudicially, and the increase of 7 per mille in Sibságar and 4 per mille in Cachar have combined to raise the ratio for the province by 2 per mille.

Death-rate among adults

3. The following table shows the mortality among both Act and non-Act adults in the years 1883 and 1884. The last two columns are compiled from the statement in paragraph 5 of Chapter V.

Districts.	Number of deaths among adults.						Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.						Annual strength of total adult population of both Act- and Non-Act labourers	
	Act.		Non-Act.		Total.		Act.		Non-Act.		Total			
	1883.	1884.	1883	1884.	1883	1884	1883	1884.	1883	1884.	1883	1884	1883	1884.
Sylhet	425	575	549	624	974	1,199	76 1	68 2	30 4	29 7	42·2	40 8	23,073	29,351
Cachar	419	739	762	829	1 181	1,568	35·7	43 9	24 9	28 0	28 1	33·7	42 048	46,480
Lakhimpur	1,165	1 129	440	338	1,605	1 467	76 5	67 1	30·7	21 7	54 5	45 4	29 445	32 277
Sibságar	887	1,393	611	508	1,498	1,901	46 7	51 9	33 6	32 5	40 4	44 8	37,077	42,341
Nowgong	291	323	164	196	455	519	139 3	124 6	44 3	36·0	78·8	64 5	5,773	8,041
Darrang	462	554	276	307	738	861	77 8	64 0	30 6	35·2	49 4	49 4	14,953	17,399
Kámrúp	18	42	36	57	54	99	41 4	72 7	38 2	49 9	39 6	57 3	1,365	1,729
Total	3,667	4,755	2,838	2,859	6,505	7,614	61 5	58 9	30·0	29 5	42·3	42 8	153,739	177,622

Mortality among Act labourers

4. Last year's report showed a decrease in the rate of mortality among Act labourers from 67·9 to 61·5 per mille. The figures given in the statement above show a further reduction to 58·9 per mille; this is still a lamentably high ratio, but is a great improvement on the figures of 1882.

Taking the district figures separately, we find that Cachar, Sibságar, and Kámrúp show an increased death-rate; in Kámrúp, however, the figures are too small to justify an inference being drawn from them. The enormously high death-rate in Nowgong among the Act labour force was commented on in last year's report. This year there is a slight improvement, the rate having fallen from 139·3 to 124·6 per mille; the mortality, however, is still shockingly high, and points to the need for strict enquiry into the sanitary conditions of the more unhealthy Nowgong gardens. The attention of the Commissioner of the Assam Valley and the Deputy-Commissioner of Nowgong has already been directed to these gardens. Cachar, although it still has the lowest death-rate for Act labourers, shows an increase on the year 1883 of nearly 8 per mille. The improvement in the three other districts is marked, but in no district do the figures show any such improvement as to justify the relaxation of any of the rules which have been prescribed for the sanitary welfare of the labourer under the Act.

Causes of deaths among Act adults.

5. The following table shows the recorded causes of the deaths that occurred last year among the adult Act labourers.

District.	Mean strength of Act labourers employed in 1884.		Deaths from				Total of columns 4 to 7.			Annual ratio per mille.
	First half.	Second half.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Other causes.	First half.	Second half.	Total.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Sylhet	8,028	8,774	127	170	89	189	261	314	575	68·2
Cachar	15.818	18,025	222	132	83	302	384	355	739	43·9
Lakhimpur	16,551	17,098	267	222	89	551	563	566	1,129	67·1
Sibságar	25,233	28,238	381	277	128	607	625	768	1,393	51·9
Nowgong	2,511	2,665	74	68	19	162	149	174	323	124·6
Darrang	7,938	9,430	139	102	35	278	264	290	554	64·0
Kámrúp	564	595	15	10	3	14	23	19	42	72·7
Total of 1884	76,645	84,827	1,225	981	446	2,103	2,269	2,486	4,755	58·9
Total of 1883	52,758	65,398	786	778	514	1,589	1,493	2,174	3,667	61·5
Total of 1882	30.393	36,372	388	602	235	1,075	867	1,434	2,301	67·9

The deaths from cholera have again doubled, and the death-rate from this disease has also risen from 13 to 15 per mille. Deaths from dysentery and other causes have also considerably increased, while those from jungle fever show a decrease.

Mortality compared with immigration.

6. As in last year's report, a statement is subjoined giving the order in which districts stand, both according to the ratio of mortality and according to the proportion of newly-imported Act coolies to the total population under the Act.

	Order of ratio of deaths among Act coolies.		Order of proportion of newly-imported Act coolies to total Act population.	
Nowgong	1	124·6	1	50·65
Kámrúp	2	72·7	2	47·84
Sylhet	3	68·2	4	38·23
Lakhimpur	4	67·1	3	39·16
Darrang	5	64·0	5	34·59
Sibságar	6	51·9	7	25·52
Cachar	7	43·9	6	26·28

Last year it was noticed that these two series differed considerably from each other, and that, unlike former years, the proportion of new importations appeared to have had little to do with the mortality of a district. This year, however, the two series are remarkably similar, and the figures go far to confirm the experience of past years and the constant assertions of the planting community, that the abnormal death-rate among Act

labourers is due to the importation of bad batches of contractors' coolies. The ratio of mortality in Nowgong, however, is still out of all proportion to the number of fresh immigrants, and if contractors are really responsible for the high death-rate which many gardens show, the Officiating Chief Commissioner hopes that garden managers and owners will be sufficiently alive to their own interests as to reduce the mortality by importing as few contractors' coolies as possible.

Death-rate and causes of deaths among non-Act adults.

7. There has been very little change in the death-rate among non-Act adult labourers, some districts showing a slight increase and others a slight decrease. Altogether, 2,859 non-Act adults died in 1884, a ratio per mille of 29·5, while in 1883, 2,838 died, with a ratio per mille of 30.

The table below shows the causes to which the deaths of these 2,859 persons were attributed.

District.	Mean strength of non-Act labourers employed in 1884.		Deaths from					Totals of columns 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.			Annual death-ratio per mille.
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Dropsy.	Other causes.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	
1	2		3	4	5	6	7	8			9
Sylhet	19,913	21,987	116	145	88	...	275	277	347	624	29·7
Cachar	29,646	29,472	251	107	121	...	350	448	381	829	28·0
Lakhimpur	14,833	16,073	60	46	42	42	148	146	192	338	21·7
Sibságar	16,083	15,128	124	80	44	...	260	269	239	508	32·5
Nowgong	5,234	5,672	35	23	23	...	115	99	97	196	36·0
Darrang	8,761	8,670	62	46	45	...	154	144	163	307	35·2
Kámrúp	1,046	1,253	7	10	13	...	27	28	29	57	49·9
Total of 1884	95,517	98,256	655	457	376	42	1,329	1,411	1,448	2,859	29·5
Total of 1883	96,412	92,910	582	491	510	...	1,255	1,399	1,439	2,838	30·0

Cholera was slightly more fatal than in 1883, but, as in the case of Act labourers, there is a distinct decrease in the number of victims of jungle fever.

Death-rate among children.

8. The statement given below shows the death-rate among children to have risen from 39·7 to 44 per mille. Kámrúp and Sibságar show the highest rate of mortality, and are chiefly responsible for the increase in the death-rate of the whole Province. All diseases claim their share in this increase, although the increase under cholera is proportionally highest. Neglect on the part of the women, who are unable to do their daily task and at the same time look after their children, and who cannot afford to do no work and stay at home, accounts in a great measure for the high mortality among children.

District.	Mean strength of children in 1884.		Deaths from					Total of columns 4 to 8.			Total of 1883.	Annual ratio per mille of death-rate.	
	First half.	Second half.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever	Dropsy.	Other causes.	First half.	Second half.	Total.		1884.	1883.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Sylhet	12,870	14,845	94	95	177	....	280	344	302	646	485	47·0	46·2
Cachar	31,953	33,622	88	144	182	....	678	598	494	1,092	904	33·4	30·6
Lakhimpur	12,203	13,875	35	78	56	27	276	189	283	472	420	36·6	37·8
Sibságar	19,744	21,561	197	197	281	....	514	551	638	1,189	775	57·4	45·2
Nowgong	3,155	3,414	28	27	53	....	63	96	75	171	134	52·5	54·1
Darrang	5,831	6,286	58	37	72	....	157	176	148	324	267	53·7	53·2
Kámrup	755	869	13	7	11	....	44	52	23	75	45	95·3	73·7
Total of 1884	86,492	93,974	513	585	832	27	2,012	2,006	1,963	3,969	3,030	44·0	39·7
Total of 1883	73,893	78,363	327	476	789	....	1,438	1,358	1,672	3,030	.....	39·7	.....

Order of demerit as regards death-rate

9. The following is the order of demerit of the various districts, both with regard to the three different classes in the labour force and with regard to the total mortality.

	Order of mortality among			
	Act adults.	Non-Act adults.	Children.	Total.
Sylhet	3	5	4	6
Cachar	7	6	7	7
Lakhimpur	4	7	6	5
Sibságar	6	4	5	4
Nowgong	1	2	2	2
Darrang	5	3	3	3
Kámrúp	2	1	1	1

Cachar still maintains its reputation as the healthiest district in the province, although its death-rate for non-Act adults is slightly higher than that of Lakhimpur. Kámrúp has even beaten Nowgong in its ratio of mortality, and appears first in three out of four lists, but, as already noticed, the Kámrúp figures are small. In the succeeding chapter it will be seen that its high death-rate is due to three gardens, and may be deemed accidental. The improvement in Lakhimpur is most marked, and applies equally to all classes of labourers. In Sibságar, though the population has largely increased, the death-rate has also increased.

Mortality according to country of origin.

10. The statement below shows the mortality figures distributed according to nationality. The figures for adults only are included in this table.

Nationality.	Sex.	Deaths amongst adults of both classes.		Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.		Annual strength of adults of both Act and non-Act labourers.	
		1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.
Bengal	Men	756	872	33·8	36·9	42,737	47,536
	Women	688	880				
North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	Men	1,149	1,154	54·4	48·0	32,985	38,686
	Women	646	702				
Chota Nagpur	Men	1,678	2,038	43·3	47·1	68,975	79,259
	Women	1,307	1,696				
Nepal	Men	8	8	30·8	42·6	292	305
	Women	1	5				
Madras	Men	45	36	51·7	44·7	1,219	1,343
	Women	18	24				
Bombay	Men	3	5	32·8	30·9	244	388
	Women	5	7				
Assam	Men	176	131	27·6	18·7	7,280	10,010
	Women	25	56				
Total	Men	3,815	4,244	43·5	41·9	87,657	101,391
	Women	2,690	3,370	40·7	44·2	66,081	76,227
Grand Total		6,505	7,614	42·3	42·9	153,739	177,622

The greatest increase has been among coolies from Chota Nagpur. It is satisfactory to see that coolies from the North-Western Provinces have stood the climate of Assam and their work in a tea-garden better than in former years; it is true that the death-rate among them is still highest, but this year the Chota Nagpur coolies have suffered very nearly as much.

CHAPTER VIII.—Unhealthy Gardens.

Unhealthy gardens defined.

As explained in last year's report, all gardens that have 10 or more deaths on them during the year, and the death-rate on which exceeds 7 per cent., or 70 per mille, are classed as "unhealthy gardens.'

The following statement shows the proportion of unhealthy gardens in each district.

District.	Number of gardens.	Number of unhealthy gardens.	Percentage of unhealthy gardens.
Sylhet	108	15	13·8
Cachar	183	9	4·9
Lakhimpur	155	11	7·1
Sibságar	235	25	10·6
Nowgong	70	16	22·8
Darrang	128	14	10·9
Kámrúp	87	3	3·4
Total	966	93	9·6
Total for 1883	1,023	69	6·7

In the succeeding sections the unhealthy gardens are separately treated of district by district.

Unhealthy gardens in Sylhet.

2. There were 15 unhealthy gardens in Sylhet in 1884, as compared with 13 in 1883, five of these had a mortality over 7 per cent. but under 8, and in only six cases was the mortality over 10 per cent., whereas in 1883 there were only two of the unhealthy gardens having a mortality of less than 8 per cent., and in eight cases the ratio was higher than 10 per cent. The following details of the deaths on these gardens will be of interest.

List of unhealthy gardens, Sylhet.

Sub-division.	Name of garden.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
		First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
North Sylhet.	Lalla Khál	238	244	5	26	31	21·0	106·5	127·5	6	64·5
	Luba Cherra*	690	768	34	32	66	49·2	41·6	90 8	31	136·8
South Sylhet	Kakia Cherra	225	252	26	23	49	115·5	91·2	206·8	25	208·3
	Lakhi Cherra	461	528	27	46	73	58·5	87·1	145·6	47	130·1
	Kalighát*	595	712	31	53	84	52·1	74·4	126·5	62	168·4
	Khajuri Cherra	482	507	32	18	50	66·3	35·5	101·8	28	79·0
	Fuskuri*	533	466	35	14	49	65·6	30·0	95·6	36	144·0
	Gandi Cherra	233	265	5	18	23	21·4	67·9	89·3	7	142·8
	Sindurkhan*	564	600	24	24	48	42·5	40·0	82·5	27	89·0
	Barma Cherra	309	342	15	9	24	48·5	26·3	74·8	16	58·1
	Chowtally	500	430	32	3	35	64·0	6·9	70·9	20	82·6
Karimganj	Shábázpur	447	509	56	7	63	125·2	13·7	138·9	22	56.8
	Tárvin Cherra	533	531	31	10	41	58·1	18·8	76·9	...	...
	Baithákhál*	293	371	13	12	25	44·3	32·3	76·6	10	40.6
	Dámái	111	125	...	9	9	...	72·	72·	...	...
	Total of unhealthy gardens..	6,214	6,650	366	304	670	58·9	45·8	104·7		
	Total of district	40,811	45,607	882	963	1,845	21·6	21·1	42·7		
	Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens.	34,597	38,957	516	659	1,175	14·9	16·9	31·8		

* Were in the list for 1883.

Of the gardens mentioned above, five, namely, Luba Cherra, Kálighát, Fuskuri, Sindurkhán, and Baithákhál, were in the black list for 1883. Out of 66 deaths on the

Luba Cherra garden 34 were caused by cholera and 12 by dysentery, 18 out of the 31 deaths on Lállakhál were due to cholera.

The following extracts are made by the Deputy-Commissioner from the subdivisional reports:—

"*South Sylhet.*—The deaths on Sindurkhán have fallen from 55 to 48, and the rate from 144 to 82 per mille. On Kálighát they have increased from 48 to 84, with a corresponding increase of population, while the rate has risen from 104 to 126. Kálighát, last year sixth, is this year third in order of demerit, while the population of Fuskuri has about doubled, the deaths have fallen from 74 to 49, and the ratio from 240 to 95. This shows a marked improvement. A number of sickly coolies have been sent away from these gardens. Of the 5 others Kakiacherra has a bad pre-eminence, with 49 deaths among a population of 238, and the lamentable rate of 206 per mille, rising to 208 per mille among Act coolies. I have received orders that the Civil Surgeon or myself should inspect these gardens before the end of the cold weather.

"*Karimganj-Tarvincherra.*—In the case of Tarvin it would be of no practical interest to enquire into any defect of site that may have existed, as the lines have been shifted a mile or more from the hills to the open country. The garden always had an unhealthy reputation, which it is to be hoped it may now lose. The epidemic of cholera which occurred was due to the arrival of an infected batch of coolies on the garden in March. Dr. Burgess, who was in medical charge of the Chargola Valley at the time, stayed on the garden while it lasted, and, I believe, all due precautions were taken to prevent the spread of the disease.

"*Shábázpur.*—This garden was so unfortunate as to suffer from epidemics both of cholera and small-pox almost simultaneously. The manager informed me when I inspected the garden that every precaution was taken in both cases, and I believe this to have been the case. The coolies on Shábázpur are as well off as on any garden that I know; and that the high death-rate has had no influence in making the garden unpopular is satisfactorily shown by the rate of desertions, which is the lowest for any garden having Act coolies, and the lowest but two for gardens employing free labourers.

"*Baithákhál.*—This garden was specially inspected by the Civil Surgeon during the year, owing to the high death-rate for 1883. He recommended the draining of a small bit of swamp lying in front of the lines. This was carried out before the close of the year. Sufficient time has not elapsed to judge whether the draining of this swamp will benefit the coolies, but it may reasonably be expected to have some good effect. The site of the lines as now situated appears favourable enough, and differs little from that of other gardens near, which are exceptionally healthy. The work of draining, which, as with them, has hitherto been the principal employment for the coolies on Baithákhál, appears to have had no prejudicial effect on these coolies. That it is malarial influence in some shape or other that causes the peculiar unhealthiness of this garden is indisputable, but I believe the poor class of labourer hitherto imported is responsible for the high mortality. As the garden becomes more opened out, and the coolies now on it become acclimatised, it may be hoped the death-rate will decrease."

Unhealthy gardens in Cachar.

3. The number of gardens returned as unhealthy in this district is 9, as against 5 in 1883 and 3 only in 1882. Of these 9, 3 were in the list for 1883, namely, Abongcherra, Isacherra and Myracherra. There has been a decrease in the mortality on the last two of these gardens, but an increase in the case of Abongcherra.

The following statement gives details of the death-rate on these gardens.

Gardens.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
	First half year.	Second half year.	First half year.	Second half year.	Total.	First half year.	Second half year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
Chandighat	555	627	40	9	49	72·0	14·3	86·3	20	111·9
Mainadhar	111	282	14	9	23	126·1	31·9	158·0	13	552·3
Abongcherra (1)	374	379	19	18	37	50·8	47·4	98·2	20	171·2
Panicherra	349	356	16	22	38	45·8	61·7	107·5	5	89·4
Pathicherra (2)	519	538	18	21	39	34·6	39·0	73·6	38	92·6
Isacherra (3)	239	247	14	8	22	58·5	32·3	90·8	15	147·3
Marticherra	326	516	12	24	36	36·8	46·5	83·3	22	77·5
Myracherra (4)	449	383	22	9	31	48·9	23·4	72·3	13	62·7
Moniorkhal	233	243	17	8	25	72·9	32·9	105·8	...	...
Total of unhealthy gardens	3,155	3,571	172	128	300	54·5	35·8	90·3	...	...
Total of district	77,418	81,119	1,430	1,230	2,660	18·5	15·1	33·6	...	...
Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens	74,263	77,548	1,258	1,102	2,360	16·9	14·2	31·1	...	...

(1) was in the list for 1883. (3) was in the list for 1883.
(2) ditto for 1880 and 1881. (4) ditto ditto.

The Deputy-Commissioner has given very full accounts of these gardens, from which the following passages are quoted.

"*Chandighát.*—In 1884, 49 deaths occurred in this garden, 20 among Act and 29 among non-Act labourers; 26, or more than half of the deaths, were from cholera, and of the other 23 about one-third

were deaths from dysentery. During the first half-year 201 coolies were imported by garden-sardars, and cholera cases were numerous among the new importations. Of the 26 deaths caused from cholera, 15 were among the Act labourers and the rest among the non-Act labourers. There were 15 deaths among children."

This garden had a high mortality in 1875 and 1876, and, on the recommendation of a committee, it was closed for a certain time to labourers from the North-Western Provinces. The Civil Surgeon has received orders to inspect and specially report on the garden.

Mainadhar.—This is a garden situated in the very south-east corner of the district, on the Barák and beyond the lofty Bhuban hills that form the natural boundary of Cachar. It is accessible only by boat, and is situated just outside the frontier police stockade. Fever and dysentery were common among new importations on this garden, and eight of the twenty-three deaths reported were of coolies recruited in 1883 or 1884, seven more being of children. The police forming the guard here are also known to suffer considerably from fever. The Deputy-Commissioner adds—

"The site is an outpost of civilisation in the jungle, and till the latter is cleared can never be healthy for new coolies, or in fact for any one but Kukies or hill tribes."

Abongcherra.—This garden was one on which a committee was to have been held, but the Deputy-Commissioner has now recommended that the Civil Surgeon should specially inspect it, and that his report should decide whether a committee is to be held or not. The Deputy-Commissioner adds—

"This garden has been opened about 12 years, and its position is not healthy, being surrounded on almost all sides by jungle, and lying right in the terai at the foot of the North Cachar hills. Fever and dysentery cases are numerous on the garden. Dysentery cases are not so numerous among old coolies as among the newly-imported ones. This garden being some way from a market, there may also be occasionally a difficulty about fresh supplies."

Panicherra.—This garden is completely shut in by hills, and is most isolated. Fever, of course, rages after the floods (from the river Jatinga) go down, and the wind in the day-time during the cold weather from the gorges is also most unhealthy. Eleven deaths on this garden were from cholera alone.

Pathicherra.—This garden has appeared three times in the black list since it was opened in 1878. A committee sat on it in 1880, and it was closed for a short time to coolies from the North-West Provinces. This year 22 out of the 39 deaths were due to cholera, and of these 39 deaths no less than 22 of them were of newly-imported coolies. The lines have been removed and rebuilt on a site more sheltered from the gorge winds.

Isacherra.—Was attacked by the cholera, causing 9 deaths, brought into the garden by newly-imported coolies.

Marthicherra.—The returns from this garden include those of Ainacherra, where the chief mortality occurs. This is a new garden in the north-west of the district, and depending largely on new importations, among whom dysentery has been very rife; there being no less than 14 deaths from this cause.

In Myracherra 15 deaths and in Monierkhal 16 deaths were due to cholera.

Unhealthy gardens in Kámrúp.

4. Three gardens are returned as unhealthy in Kámrúp; details are given below.

Gardens.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
	1st half-year.	2nd half-ear.	1st half-year.	2nd half-year	Total.	1st half-year.	2nd half-year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
Bardwar	306	338	15	8	23	49·0	23·8	72·8	7	64·2
Choonsali	137	191	8	12	20	58 3	62·8	121·1	6	123·3
Kumarkuchi	75	76	37	11	48	493·3	144·7	638·0	18	594·0
Total of unhealthy gardens	518	605	60	31	91	115·8	51·2	167·0	.....	.....
Total of district	2,366	2,718	103	71	174	43·5	26·1	69·6	.....	.....
Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens	1,848	2,113	43	40	83	23·2	18·9	42·1	.....	.....

The high mortality on the Kumarkuchi garden was due in great measure to the outbreak of a cholera epidemic. The Deputy-Commissioner says—

"The Civil Surgeon was deputed to make a special inspection of the garden, and he recommended the change of the site of the coolie lines, which were built on low ground enclosed by hills. The

lines have now been removed to more open and higher ground, and there is a prospect of the labourers enjoying better health."

A further report has been called for by the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts from the Deputy-Commissioner.

The mortality on Barduar is said to be due to exceptional causes. With reference to Chunsali, the Deputy-Commissioner writes rather vaguely—

"The garden of Chunsali is situated in a remarkably healthy part of the district, on the banks of the Brahmaputra, and the high death-rate is chiefly due to exceptional causes, such as the outbreak of cholera and to the mortality among children."

Unhealthy gardens in Nowgong.

5. There has not been much improvement as yet in the Nowgong district, and during the past year some gardens had to be closed to the importation of Act labourers, and committees were appointed to sit on others. The suggestions of these committees have been carried out, and the Deputy-Commissioner has shown considerable energy in insisting on the completion of promised reforms, so that it may be hoped that wholesome sanitary measures will show their due effect in the present year. As matters stand, however, there were 16 unhealthy gardens in 1884, as compared with 14 in 1883 and 1882. The following are the figures for these gardens:—

Gardens.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
Lengting (2)	343	342	20	9	29	58·3	26·3	84·6	13	93·9
Anjukpani (4)	164	162	8	10	18	48·7	61·7	110·4	12	177·0
Moapani (3)	210	175	18	15	28	61·9	85·7	147·6	22	380·0
Hatibandha (3)	254	288	16	28	44	62·9	97·2	160·1	32	163·5
Solal Sakmutti (1)	280	295	11	10	21	39·2	33·8	73·0	8	70·6
Kamakhya* or Silghat (2)	205	242	22	13	35	107·3	53·7	161·0	19	162·5
Sonari or Koliabar	150	161	6	20	26	40·0	124·2	164·2	18	210·9
Owguri (2)	191	190	11	11	22	57·5	57·8	115·3	11	149·1
Kathori	144	188	2	12	14	13·9	63·8	77·7	13	174·6
Kapili	117	127	6	10	16	51·2	78·7	129·9	6	150·0
Udmari	347	379	25	1	26	72·0	2·6	74·6	18	169·8
Samaguri	155	185	4	12	16	25·8	64.8	90·6	9	147·1
Siconi (1)	301	341	9	14	23	29·9	41·0	70·9	8	89·6
Chapanalla	120	131	7	3	10	58·3	22·9	81·2	....	....
Killing	74	74	4	3	7	54·0	40·5	94·5	....	....
Tubuki	48	49	4	1	5	88·3	20·4	109·7	....	....
Total of unhealthy gardens	3,103	3,329	168	172	340	54·1	51·6	105·7	....	....
Total of the district	10,881	11,752	344	346	690	31·6	29·4	61·0	....	....
Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens	7,778	8,423	176	174	350	22·6	20·6	43·2	....	....

(1) Was in the list for 1883.
(2) Were „ lists for 1882 and 1883.
(3) Were in the lists for 1881, 1882, and 1883.
(4) Was „ „ for 1880, 1881, 1882, and 1883.
* Called Koliabor in the Report for 1883.

Of the 16 gardens mentioned above committees were appointed to inspect and report on seven, and Siconi was medically inspected by Dr. Campbell, of Tezpur, so that 8 out of the 16 were carefully inspected by a medical officer. The Deputy-Commissioner says—

"The remaining eight gardens were not inspected by any medical officer. We were without a Civil Surgeon for seven months of 1884. I endeavoured to get the services of Dr. Mullane for the purpose of inspecting these gardens, but he was unable to be spared from Gauháti. Of these eight gardens in which the death-rate is over 7 per cent., three do not employ Act coolies, and in two of these the deaths were less than nine, so that in point of fact there are five gardens that ought to have been inspected medically under Rule 150 and were not so inspected. The Civil Surgeon recently appointed has now joined, and he will inspect the gardens in the course of the year."

Siconi.—Dr. Campbell, of Tezpur, thus writes about this garden:—

"I inspected Siconi on 7th October. I found the lines were good, on a high site, well drained. The houses are good and more than sufficient for the population, so there is no overcrowding. The water-supply is very indifferent. There is a *pucca* well, but the situation of it is very bad, and the water must get contaminated. There is a small river close by, that, whenever it overflows, lays the land round this well, close up to the mouth of the well, under water, and the coolies bathe and wash in this water, which must filtrate into the well. What is worse, however, is that this land can be little better than a latrine. It is low land, almost like a *jhil*, and the coolies undoubtedly go there to ease themselves in or near it. Consequently, whenever it rains, this must also soak into the well. The well-water was tested and found far from pure. This well should be entirely closed and filled in, and a *pucca* well constructed on a site to be selected by Dr. Ruddock. At the same time it should be fitted with a good pump and reservoir with taps. I found that there was no native doctor resident on this garden, but the garden is visited weekly by Dr. Ruddock. A native doctor should be insisted on to attend the coolies daily."

The Deputy-Commissioner directed the manager to carry out these instructions before 31st March 1885.

During the year 1884 committees were assembled to consider the circumstances attending a high mortality rate on no less than 11 gardens in Nowgong. Of these, 9 were in the list for 1883 and 8 are in the list for 1884. The gardens were New Salona,

Borghát, Lengteng, Noapani, Háspani (or Diju Valley), Anjukpani, Hatibandha, Kamakhya or Silghat, Solál Sakmutti, Kellyden, Sonari. The first seven of these gardens are all in the Diju Valley, where, until the Superintendent himself opened a market, there was no bázár within less than ten miles of most of the gardens. In the case of Borghát, Lengteng, and Salona, the manager had already taken energetic measures and introduced great reforms, and the committee on inspection had no fault to find with them. The gardens of Hatibandha and Háspani have been closed to Act labourers, the first-named by the verdict of the committee and the second by the order of the Chief Commissioner under Section 130 of Act I. of 1882, on the recommendation of the Commissioner, who considered that the Committee, in merely suggesting some improvements, had dealt too leniently with it. The gardens of Noapáni and Anjukpani were closed to all Act labourers who had not been two years in the Province, and in the case of the latter the old coolie-lines were condemned, and the manager was ordered to build new lines on a spot selected by the Committee.

At Kellyden and Kamakhya, the Committee found good lines but bad water. In both cases the managers were ordered to provide *pucca* wells with pumps and reservoirs. At Sonari and Solal Sakmutti, both the lines and the drinking-water were condemned, and the Committee gave orders to the manager on both points.

The Deputy-Commissioner says—

"In all cases in which improvements were ordered with regard to the lines or the water-supply, time was given up to the end of March to carry out the Committee's orders. In many cases the improvements have already been entirely or partially carried out, and early in April I shall visit all the eleven gardens, and see that the Committee's instructions have been entirely fulfilled."

All Act labourers have been already withdrawn from Hatibandha, and all who had not served two years in the province from Noapáni and Anjukpani. The orders relative to Haspáni were received after the close of the year. With reference to the Diju Valley gardens, the Deputy-Commissioner says—

"Early in the year the mortality on these gardens attracted my notice, and, after inspecting them thoroughly in May, I submitted a special report on them in June, and this led to the enforcement of Section 128 of the Act. These seven gardens have been carefully watched during the year. They were thoroughly inspected by me in May, and visited again three times between June and December. They were all visited twice by the Commissioner, and lately the Deputy-Surgeon-General inspected them in great detail, examining the lines, medical arrangements, labourers, &c., and making close enquiries regarding their diet and mode of living. Dr. Eteson's visit was after the Committee had sat, and he saw the great improvements that had already been carried out at the time of his visit."

Unhealthy gardens in Darrang.

6. The unhealthy gardens of the Darrang district are shown below.

Name of garden.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
Protabgarh (1)	268	412	10	16	26	37·31	38·83	76 14	17	94·13
Monai (2)	181	173	7	16	23	38 67	92 48	131·15	10	141·89
Borpukri (3)	436	437	11	21	32	25·22	48·05	73·27	6	28·36
Gillahating (4)	314	301	8	17	25	25·47	56·47	81 94	15	214·32
Sadharughope	375	391	13	16	29	34·66	40·92	75·58	18	156 28
Majulighar (5)	426	475	16	32	48	37·55	67·36	104 91	25	184·68
Naharani	314	380	17	16	33	54·14	42·10	96·24	27	110·84
Bamgáon	401	446	45	11	56	112·21	24 66	136·87	32	191·78
Panbari (6)	373	367	15	14	29	40·21	38·14	78·35	23	117·29
Gronland (7)	1,009	1,040	65	16	81	64·42	15·38	79·80	47	122·18
Bongong (8)	185	173	14	6	20	75·67	34·68	110·35	8	82·86
Kalaigáon (9)	249	267	12	6	18	48·19	22·47	70·66	14	102·42
Total of unhealthy gardens	4,531	4,862	233	187	420	51·4	38·4	89·8	...	...
Total of district	22,530	24,386	584	601	1,185	25·9	24·6	50·5	...	...
Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens	17,999	19,524	351	414	765	19·5	21·2	40·7	...	...

(1) Was in the list for 1883.
(2) Ditto 1881 and 1882
(3) Ditto ditto
(4) Ditto 1882 and 1883.
(5) Ditto for 1882.
(6) Ditto for 1881 and 1882.
(7) Ditto for 1881, 1882, and 1883.
(8) Ditto for 1883.
(9) Ditto ditto.

The Deputy-Commissioner writes—

"The number of gardens on the unhealthy list this year, *viz.*, 14, is the same as that in 1883. Of these 5, *viz.*, Protábghar, Gillahating, Gronland, Bongong, and Kalaigaon were on the list for 1883, 6, *viz.*, Monai, Bopukri, Gillahating, Majulighar, Panbari, and Gronland, in 1882, and 6, *viz.*, Monai, Borpukri, Bamgaón, Panbari, Gronland, and Kalaigaon, in 1881. Out of these 14 the first 10 are in the sadr subdivision and the last 4 in Mangaldai, and out of the 10 in the sadr 6 are situated in the Biswanath circle and one in Behali. The reason for the large proportion is probably due to the fact that the planters about Tezpur have gone to far more expense in the matter of getting a good water-supply for their coolies, the Borelli Company having taken the initiative in introducing large cisterns supplied with four taps so as to keep the water pure. Other gardens about Tezpur have supplied themselves with similar pumps and cisterns, and the Biswanath planters have also now recognised the great importance of improving their water-supply, and are ordering out pumps, &c., from England."

Pratábgarh.—This garden had a mortality of 124·2 per mille in 1883, with a mortality among Act coolies of 369·7 per mille. These figures have fallen in 1884 to 76·14 and 94·13 per mille respectively. The Deputy-Commissioner remarks—

"I should certainly have held a committee on this garden had not the lines been moved to a site far away from the river, where a good well has been constructed with a large pucca tank and filtering arrangements similar to that used in the jail, the water being drawn off by cocks."

The health of the coolies is said to show still further improvement this year.

Borpukri.—The lines on this estate were moved to a more healthy site in 1883, owing to the heavy mortality in the years 1882 and 1881, but the garden, absent from the black list for 1883, reappears in 1884. The mortality among non-Act labourers is more than double that among those under the Act. At the suggestion of the Civil Surgeon, the manager has been directed to carry out some minor reforms in the garden.

Sadharughope.—This garden is reported to be healthily situated and well looked after, and the only reason that the Deputy-Commissioner can suggest for the high mortality is that the coolies drink the water of the river Sadharu, and not from the wells provided for them.

Májulighar.—The lines in this garden have just been moved to a healthier site, and large wells, to be fitted with pumps and cisterns, are in course of construction, so it may be hoped that the mortality in 1885 will show a considerable diminution.

Naharani.—The Civil Surgeon has inspected this garden in March 1885, and he reports that 50 per cent. of the death-rate was due to cholera and a large proportion to bowel-complaints, due to a bad or deficient water-supply. The Deputy-Commissioner adds—

"At present there are two small pucca wells, but a fine large pucca well is under construction, and a reservoir and pump are also to be supplied. The two small wells are apt to be contaminated."

Bamgáon.—Is a healthy garden, the mortality in 1881 being due to a lamentable accident on the Mansiri river. Its appearance in this year's list is due to an outbreak of cholera, to which cause a very large proportion of the deaths are due.

Panbari.—The Civil Surgeon in June 1884 reported very favourably on this garden, but, not knowing of its heavy death-rate, omitted to include it in his tour of inspection in February. He should inspect it now without further delay.

Gillahating.—This persistently unhealthy garden employs so few Act coolies that the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, did not consider it necessary to hold a committee on it. Some portions of the lines have been removed to a better site, and the mortality figures are being carefully watched.

Monai.—The number of Act coolies on this garden is only 69. The Deputy-Commissioner has little to say about it, except that he *thinks* the water-supply might be improved.

In consequence of its persistently high mortality, a committee was held on *Kalaigaon* on the 5th March 1885, and in their Resolution said—

"The only thing that requires alteration is the water-supply, and that must be looked to at once. The manager, Mr. Walker, has ordered two rotary force and lift pumps, and is going to have a cistern

made on the model of the one existing at Phulbari and other gardens in this district. A site was selected by the Committee about 50 yards or so to the south of the lines in the tea. Some little time must, however, elapse before this cistern is completed, and the Committee are therefore of opinion that as the season at which cholera generally appears is now coming on, the manager should at once have dug two wells, made of corrugated iron drums, to be used till the cistern is completed."

A Committee was also held on *Gronland* in September 1884, and the Assistant-Inspector, who has subsequently inspected the garden, reports that the orders of the Committee have been carried out, but that one of the wells required cleaning and another was needed for the new coolie-lines.

Unhealthy gardens in Sibságar.

7. No less than 25 gardens have to be put in the list for 1884 from the Sibságar district. The following are their names.

Gardens.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
Sadr sub-division—										
Mahokothi (1)	242	232	12	9	21	49·5	38·7	88·2	12	74·7
Domer Dallang (1)	281	323	12	13	25	42·7	40·2	82·9	8	45·5
Khumtai	118	147	8	6	14	67·7	40·8	108·5	7	96·0
Thirwalbari (2)	110	134	6	8	14	54·5	59·7	114·2	10	133·7
Sonari (2)	358	372	21	12	33	58·6	32·2	90·8	11	62·6
Borbam	376	377	34	13	47	90·4	34·4	124·8	21	107·4
Jaboka (3)	203	260	17	5	22	83·7	19·2	102·9	22	138·6
Digholi (Maibella)	200	237	21	1	22	105·0	4·2	109·2	2	32·2
Deopani	782	801	15	41	56	19·1	51·1	70·2	45	113·1
Luckwa	383	386	10	17	27	26·1	44·0	70·1	7	28·6
Jorhát sub-division—										
Dhekiajuli (4)	510	523	37	46	83	72·5	87·9	160·4	38	137·6
Hathigarh	181	230	32	2	34	176·7	8·6	185·3	22	229·3
Nagadhuli	344	379	12	26	38	34·8	68·6	103·4	14	64·0
Dehingiapar	365	370	29	29	58	79·4	78·3	157·7	29	277·2
Bandasulia (5)	231	262	9	10	19	38·9	38·1	77·0	10	98·9
Nagnijan	157	131	22	4	26	140·1	30·5	170·6	11	147·6
Koliapani (6)	143	147	10	4	14	69·9	27·2	97·1	3	58·8
Ramkong	815	887	70	32	102	85·8	36·0	121·8	66	125·2
Chaykatta	617	689	24	34	58	38·8	49·3	88·1	25	70·3
Cinnamara	1,049	1,116	21	56	77	20·0	50·1	70·1	30	53·3
Golághát sub-division—										
Daigorun	352	361	21	10	31	59·6	27·7	87·3	11	63·9
Duria	285	289	15	23	38	52·6	79·5	132·1	24	119·5
Bonn	159	127	5	10	15	31·4	78·7	110·1	11	203·6
Dhunsiri	380	498	20	19	39	52·6	38·1	90·7	26	125·0
Borchapri (7)	357	431	26	34	60	72·8	78·8	151·6	46	215·9
Total of unhealthy gardens	8,998	9,709	509	464	973	56·5	47·7	104·2	...	...
Total of district	61,060	64,927	1,445	1,645	3,090	23·6	25·3	48·9	...	...
Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens	52,062	55,218	936	1,181	2,117	17·9	21·3	39·2	...	...

(1) Was in the list for 1881.
(2) Ditto ditto 1883.
(3) Ditto ditto 1882.
(4) Ditto ditto 1883.
(5) Ditto ditto 1881 and 1882.
(6) Ditto ditto 1881, 1882, and 1883.
(7) Ditto ditto 1882.

There were only 11 unhealthy gardens in 1883, and the explanation given below of the general prevalence of cholera seems hardly sufficient without more clear details. The paragraphs of the report by the Deputy-Commissioner, dealing with this subject, are quoted below:—

"The number of unhealthy gardens has once more increased. In 1881 we had 9, in 1882 5, in 1883 11, and now in 1884 there are no less than 25. Of the 11 unhealthy gardens of last year, 4 only reappear on the present year's list, namely, Thirwalbarry and Sonari in the sadr sub-division, and Dhekiajuli and Koliapani in Jorhát. Committees under Section 128 of the Act were held by my predecessor in January last at Gabruparbat, Bandasulia, Hilikha, and Koliapani. In no case did the Committee find that the estates were unfit for the residence of labourers generally or for any particular class of labourers. Recommendations for better sanitary arrangements were however, recorded, and in one case a very necessary reform in the matter of drinking-water was peremptorily ordered. The death-rate on the unhealthy gardens was very heavy, 104·2 per mille, but their omission from the total still leaves the district death-rate very heavy, 39·2. This is sufficiently explained by the general prevalence of cholera.

"In spite of the heavy death-rate, the population of all these gardens, except that of the small garden known as Bonn, increased. Of these 25 gardens, 24 were inspected by district officers, and Dr. Atkins is now engaged in inspecting the whole of them. Instead of waiting for his report, I propose to submit it as an Appendix, merely stating here such facts as I have been able to collect about the gardens now shown on the district black-list. Dr. Partridge made special inspections of the 11 gardens shown on last year's list as being unhealthy, and three of these he visited twice. The details of inspections of the unhealthy gardens of 1884 are as follows:—Dr. Partridge inspected Ramkong, Deopani, Burbom, Koliapani, Thirwallbarry, Sonari, Nagnijan, and Dhekiajuli.

"Mr. Crouch inspected Maibella and Jaboka.

"Lieutenant Browne inspected Luckwa, Khumtai, Mahokothi, and Domer Dallang.

"Lieutenant Kennedy inspected Borchapri, Dhunsiri, Duria, and Bonn.

"Mr. Greer inspected Daigorun, and I myself, being then sub-divisional officer of Jorhát, inspected Cinnamara, Bandasulia, Hathigarh, Dehingiapar, and Nagadhuli immediately after the close of the year.

"Of the 25 unhealthy gardens of 1884, 16 have not appeared on the black list since 1880, namely, Khumtai, Burbom, Maibella, Deopani, Luckwa, Hathigarh, Nagadhuli, Dehingiapar, Nagnijan, Ramkong, Chaykatta, Cinnamara, Daigorun, Duria, Bonn, and Dhunsiri; 9 only came on the list once before, namely, Thirwallbari, Dhekiajuli, and Sonari in 1883, Borchapri and Jaboka in 1882, and Domer Dallang and Mahokothi in 1881. Gabruparbat and Koliapani are old offenders, having each appeared thrice before; as both these gardens have been allowed to remain open by the Committees held under Section 128, I need not discuss the reasons for their continued unhealthiness. I think it a pity that the Committee did not see their way to closing these two gardens to the low-caste Bhuias, Kahars, and Muchis, among whom the mortality is largest and most lasting.

"The following notes on the unhealthy gardens of 1884 are compiled from the reports received from managers and garden doctors. The excessive mortality was, in almost every case, due to cholera.

"Duria had always been a healthy garden, but in 1884 a weakly set of coolies was imported, and cholera broke out again and again. Dr. Bishop, who is in medical charge of the garden, reports that this intermittent cholera was due to contagion from the surrounding villages. 24 adults died and 14 children. Of the adults, 12 died of cholera, 4 of diarrhœa, 1 of syphilis, 4 of dysentery, 1 of beri, 1 of poison, and 6 of dropy.s Of the children, 6 died of cholera, 2 of diarrhœa, 1 of sunstroke, 1 of inanition, the mother having died on the way up from Dhubri, 1 was accidentally burnt to death, and 3 died of dysentery. Dr. Bishop thinks that 'a healthier spot could not be found,' but admits that it has been found necessary to move the lines.

"At Borbam 29 labourers died of cholera between January and June. Excepting these, the death-rate is only 4·8 per cent.

"At Domer Dallang, Mahokothi, and Khumtai, the high death-rate is attributed to a large importation of poor North-Western Provinces coolies, and to an outbreak of choleraic diarrhœa in March 1884.

"Maibella has always been an extremely healthy garden. Only one death occurred during the second half-year, and all the deaths in the first half year were due to cholera.

"Bonn, another healthy garden, was ruined by the importation of a batch of bad, weakly coolies, among whom cholera and choleraic diarrhœa played havoc.

"Sonari had 16 deaths from cholera out of 33. This garden was unhealthy last year also.

"Daigorun suffered from cholera, which was brought into the garden by a batch of coolies among whom cholera broke out during the upward journey. The Native Doctor in charge of the Nigriting depôt should have warned the manager that the coolies of this batch should be segregated.

"Ramkong and Nagnijan both had cholera in the lines.

"Borchapri was an unhealthy garden in 1882. The manager's explanation is that he imported bad coolies, chiefly Bhuias, from Gya. He says that they were 'very filthy in their habits, would eat anything, and what pay they got was spent in drink or ducks, or sweetmeats.' The garden seems to me one of those which might properly be closed to North-Western coolies.

"At Luckwa 8 deaths out of 27 were due to cholera. There were also many children still-born, a fact which indicates weak and sickly mothers. One woman died before her child could be born, four infants died of convulsions. The garden has not hitherto been an unhealthy one.

"At Thirwallbari 7 deaths, out of 14, were due to cholera. The manager is building *pucca* lines, and is trying to improve drainage. This garden, when newly opened, was extremely unhealthy.

"Cinnamara is one of the largest and best-managed gardens in the district. It is exceptionally well situated, close to the town of Jorhát; there are *pucca* lines, good water, and excellent bázár hard by, shops on the garden,—all that a coolie's soul can covet. I give an account of the exceptional mortality in 1884, drawn up by Dr. Gray, the senior medical officer of the Jorhát Tea Company.

"'The unusually high rate of mortality at this garden was due chiefly to an epidemic of infantile typho-malarial fever, complicated with extreme nervous irritability, and, in fact, derangement of the functions of nearly all the internal organs, which raged mainly during the months of August, September, October, and November, when the high temperature was unusually prolonged. On referring to my hospital register, I find that 97 children were treated in hospital (only very serious cases are admitted, others being treated in the coolie-lines), and that the daily average of sick children treated during the second half of the year was 9·5. Most of these, with careful treatment and nursing, recovered, and we lost only some of those who were brought to hospital in a dying state. Most of these, and also their parents, had been sickly since their arrival in the Province.

"'Regarding the mortality among adults, it was chiefly confined to new coolies from Chota Nagpur and the North-Western Provinces, who never worked regularly for two weeks together, seldom or never washed, ate all kinds of indigestible and unwholesome food, and consequently suffered from various complaints, such as diarrhœa, dysentery, dropsy, and general debility, for which they had solely themselves to blame, and finally their constitutions became so undermined by repeated attacks that they defied all the treatment and nursing that were freely bestowed on them.

"'The death-rate was also swelled by some unavoidable deaths among dependents from phthisis, chronic pneumonia, and old age.'

"Dhekiajuli was specially inspected by Dr. Partridge, who reported that out of 76 deaths, 25 were due to cholera, 17 to bowel-complaints (caused, he thought, by filthy feeding), 18 of debility following on the bowel-complaints aforesaid, and 16 to other diseases. It is worthy of remark that no less than 64 of the coolies who died were low caste Hindus from Midnapur and Gya.

"I give Dr. Gray's explanation in his own words:—

"'The year 1884 was so exceptionally unhealthy, 25 out of the 83 coolies who died were carried off by an epidemic of cholera. The mortality among children of coolies who had been attacked with or died of cholera, was also great, owing to the inability of their parents to look after them properly. Again, during the second half-year many were carried off who had been attacked with cholera during the first half-year.'

"At Koliapani, one of the four gardens on which a committee was held, out of 14 who died, 6 adults and 5 children died of cholera; but for the cholera having travelled down the Desoi, this would have been an exceptionally healthy garden this year. Yet in four out of the last five years it has shown an exceptionally high death-rate. It is a small garden, and, in spite of the high death-rate, there was not much sickness among the coolies generally.

"Chaykatta is one of the Jorhát Tea Company's gardens, almost as prosperous and popular an estate as Cinnamara, and never before very unhealthy. A new gang brought up cholera with them, and 13 deaths, out of 58, were due to this cause. Other deaths were apparently the indirect result of cholera.

"At Hathigarh, an extremely healthy and well-situated garden on the Desoi, 31 out of 34 deaths were due to cholera.

"At Dehingiapar, 15, out of 58 deaths, were caused by cholera. This, however, still leaves a very heavy mortality to be accounted for. Almost all the deaths occurred in a new batch of contractors' coolies, which was almost entirely swept away.

"The water-supply and the situation of the lines are both bad, and I have directed the manager to dig a new tank, and remove his lines to some higher and healthier spot. This is a private garden.

"At Nagadhuli, another private garden, there was no cholera, yet in lines hitherto not unhealthy, 38 coolies died out of 389, 13 were neglected infants (apparently), two men died of delirium, and of the rest the manager gives no account. The deaths occurred chiefly in one of the worst batches of contractors' coolies I have ever seen. Many women died, leaving infant children without their natural sustenance. I found one man on the garden in an apparently moribund condition, a widower, with three small infants, pitiable little parcels of skin and bone. The manager promised that he would try to get a fostermother for these and other motherless children.

"As to Jaboka and Dhunsiri, I have nothing to say. Bandorcholia was reported on by the committee which sat there."

Unhealthy gardens in Lakhimpur.

8. The following list shows 11 unhealthy gardens in Lakhimpur. The Civil Surgeon has sent in a clear and full report, which is quoted in full below, of all the gardens except one in this list.

Gardens.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act coolies.	
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
Guijan (1)	247	232	6	11	17	24·2	47·4	71·6	8	119·4
Sessa (B. I. T. Co.)	373	413	23	18	41	61·6	43·5	105·1	23	86·5
Oaklands (1)	366	413	21	20	41	57·3	48·4	105·7	20	87·0
Woodbine	366	417	7	26	33	19·1	62·3	81·4	17	83·4
Khamptigwali (2)	455	498	8	33	41	17·5	66·2	83·7	30	108·7
Kahang	265	302	11	12	23	41·5	39·7	81·2	15	146·2
Dibrugarh (P. W.)	299	205	12	14	26	40·1	68·2	108·3	26	113·8
Sadiya (P. W.)	181	247	6	12	18	33·1	48·5	81·6	18	81·6
Dikhari	143	157	5	7	12	34·9	44·5	79·4	1	17·8
Jaipur T. E.	330	369	14	11	25	41·4	29·8	72·2	17	82·0
Hulmari	502	519	24	31	55	47·8	59·7	107·5	28	118·2
Total of unhealthy gardens...	3,527	3,772	137	195	332	38·8	51·7	90·5		
Total of the district...	43,587	46,546	898	1,041	1,939	20·6	22·3	42·9		
Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens...	40,060	42,774	761	846	1,607	18·9	19·7	38·6		

(1) Were in the list for 1883.
(2) Was ditto for 1882 and 1883.

The Deputy-Commissioner remarks—

"Of the above gardens, Oaklands, Guijan, Khamptigwali (wrongly entered in last year's provincial report as Khamptigora), were in last year's list; the Dibrugarh and Sadiya coolie lines also appeared in the same list. Khamptigwali has been distinguished for high mortality for three years in succession."

The Civil Surgeon's report on these gardens runs as follows:—

"*Sessa* (British India Tea Company).—I visited this garden on the 1st March. It is situated on the river Sessa, about eight miles from Dibrugarh. The two noticeable features about its high death-rate last year were (1) the large number of deaths among the infants and children, and (2) an outbreak of cholera during March, in each case fifteen, out of a total of forty-one deaths.

"For neither of these can, I think, the garden be blamed. The conditions of child life on a tea-garden are altogether so unfavourable that the wonder is how so many children succeed in passing childhood's stage. A coolie woman gets a variable amount of leave for her confinement. After that, if the infant is not strangled at birth, she must either take it out with her to her work, or leave it behind, with no one to look after it. In the former case, tied to its mother's back or left in the nearest drain, it is exposed to extremes of heat and cold, to wind and to rain; in the latter the child gets half-starved, and so paves its way to a death from some bowel-disorder, or succeeds in cutting short its career by a fall or a roll into the open fire. So alive are coolie women to these facts that, to avoid the trouble of bringing up their children under such circumstances, abortion is frequently resorted to, and *dais* who produce it often make their business a very profitable one. These women live, as a rule, in the nearest bázár or basti, to be beyond the reach of the garden manager.

"Cholera made its appearance on the garden in March, lasting during the whole of the month. The disease was chiefly confined to one portion of the lines in no way in an insanitary state when I saw it, nor could I trace any history of importation. Old and new coolies suffered alike, and of those who survived many succumbed to other diseases later on. There were 30 seizures and 15 deaths, 12 adults and 3 children.

"Everything to promote the welfare of the coolie on the garden has been and is being carried out. The lines are very good and well drained, the houses roomy and in good repair. The water-supply is from earthenware tube wells and carefully conserved. The native medical man of the garden is qualified, and appears to be attentive. I have no recommendations to offer.

"*Oaklands.*—On the Dibru river, about eight miles from the station. On this garden also there has been a very high mortality among children, 18 out of the total of 41 of all ages. Of the remaining 23, there were 21 under the Act, 15 males and 6 females. Out of these 21, two-thirds of whom had been recruited in Ranchi, only one had served on the garden more than one year, and 13 one year or under. The average age of all the adults who died was 29½ years. Bowel-diseases, such as dysentery, diarrhœa, in most cases only symptoms of a cachetic and disorganised constitution, are put down as the causes of 23 deaths out of the total. Cholera accounts for 2, "in childbirth" for 5 women, and one death is entered here of a man who died when recruiting in Bengal.

"A Committee, which sat in October 1884 to report on the high mortality of this garden for the past couple of years, recommended the removal of such of the coolie lines as were situated on the river bank to a site some distance away, condemned the water-supply, and remarked on the indifferent medical help afforded the coolies. Several new tube wells are now, I believe, on their way out from England, and will shortly be sunk in the new lines, where additional houses are being erected. These improvements will, I hope, help in improving the health of the coolies for the future. There was scarcely any sickness among the coolies on the date of my inspection (11th March), and from the 1st January there had been three deaths. All the coolies that I saw looked very healthy.

"*Khamptigwali.*—There were 41 deaths on this garden also last year, or rather reported from it. Out of this number 30 were under the Act and 10 were children. Among the former are included the deaths of 2 men who died in the Dibrugarh Jail. Dysentery and diarrhœa are, as usual, stated to have been the chief causes of sickness and death, the deaths of 23 being ascribed to these causes. To dropsy and debility 6 are said to be due, to fever 4, and cholera 2. The greater number of the coolies who died had been recruited from Chota Nagpur, and only 9 had served more than one year. A few of the coolies live in houses on the banks of the river Dibru. These I found to be in very indifferent repair, and their sites badly drained. There is one well in these lines, the water from which, the manager said, was much used and liked by the coolies. I doubt this. It appeared to me, from what I saw and was told by the coolies themselves, that the river yielded all the water they used. The remainder of the coolies live in a set of lines of better construction and about three-quarters of a mile from the river, where also the drainage is very unsatisfactory. To this spot I would recommend the removal of the coolies from the other lines, and the construction of another well for their use. A more thorough system of drainage, too, should be enforced. Enough land has not been reserved to the coolies for vegetable gardens. This should be held in view in future in the construction of all coolie houses.

"*Guijan.*—Is situated on the Dibru river, four miles higher up the stream than the preceding garden. There were 17 deaths here last year, 8 being coolies under the Act; of the remainder 5 were children. No particular class of diseases seems to have operated as a cause of unhealthiness. Of the Act coolies who died, all had been more than one year on the garden, three under two years, the others, with those not under the Act, being all old coolies. The manager ascribes the cause of the high mortality for the past couple of years to be due to the importation of an especially bad batch of coolies, and who have been dying in large numbers every year. This may be so, but it appears that the mortality has been helped by the indifferent sanitary arrangements observed in the garden. The coolies used to live on the banks of the river, from which they took all the water they needed for consumption. The greater portion have now been removed to a new set of lines built away from the river, and one of the results of this removal has been a decided diminution in the mortality, only one death having occurred since the 1st January.

"I would recommend that every coolie be removed from the old lines, and made to live with the others. The wells in the new lines are simple holes dug to reach the subsoil water. The manager should be instructed to have three proper wells sunk, either pumps or made of glazed earthenware tubes. The drains, too, here should be improved, so as to drain the whole length of lines. If after

a couple of years the high mortality continues to be as high as ever, in spite of these improvements, the only plan left would be to close the garden to the recruiting of labour from depôts, and insist that all new labour be recruited by sardars.

"*Woodbine.*—The deaths on this garden occurred in greater proportion during the months of September, October, and November, when out of a total of 33 during the year, 17 died during these three months. At this time a large number of coolies were seized with dysentery, which, if it did not kill at once, left them so prostrated that they very shortly after succumbed to dropsy, debility, and other diseases of a similarly low type.

"To dysentery are ascribed 11 deaths during the year, a similar number to dropsy and debility, and the remainder to fever and some of the diseases of children. The majority of the adults were from Chota Nagpur, and, with four exceptions, over a year on the garden and fairly acclimatised, 11 were children. Of men and women, there are an equal number of deaths.

"The largest amount of sickness during the months referred to is said to have occurred among the coolies located in one particular portion of the lines, which stretches in a long row along one side of the garden. The water-supply for this portion of the lines is from an old masonry well, through whose sides surface drainage was freely allowed to trickle. There was no other source of water-supply near in the shape of tanks or streams, and it appears to me that the water from this well was one if not the sole cause of the outbreak. I would, therefore, recommend its closure at once, and the substitution of another and more impervious form of well in its place.

"I did not notice anything else in the garden to call for blame. The coolies, when I saw them, appeared a very fine lot, and healthy. One portion of the coolie-lines is simply excellent. Separate houses for each family, with circular verandahs in front and detached gardens behind. The older lines are of a plainer style, less raised, and in less satisfactory repair. The other wells on the garden, three in number, are of glazed earthenware rings, and apparently well looked after.

"*Kahang.*—Is another garden, on which a commission sat last year to report on the abnormally high death-rate among its Act coolies. As there seemed no local reason to account for its mortality, and as the manager of the garden ascribed the cause to the very bad type of coolie imported from the depôt a few years ago, it was decided to stop any more depôt coolies being imported into the garden for the future, and direct that all additional labour be recruited by the garden-sardars. I inspected the gardens again on the 18th March, principally to see if any improvement had taken place. The coolies I saw were all a very fine lot, and there was little or no sickness. I anticipate a large diminution in the number of deaths this year.

"Of the Act coolies who died last year, 15 out of 19, it may be noticed that not one had served more than three years on the garden, only 4 more than two, and the remainder one year or under. In addition to the above number, there were 5 deaths of children, making a total of 23 of all ages. 12 out of these died after September. The deaths occurred among coolies of all ages, and from a variety of causes.

"The houses in which the coolies live are, on the whole, good and kept in repair. There are a large number of vegetable gardens, and the sites of the houses are very well drained. The jungle and forests in the immediate vicinity of the lines may, perhaps, be more cleared with advantage. The water-supply is good and ample. This is one of the few gardens in this district in which a Norton's tube well has been sunk. It appears to work very satisfactorily.

"*Dikhari*—Is a small garden, about 30 miles from Dibrugarh and 13 from Sibságar, through which district it procures all its coolies. The total number of souls on the garden is about 150. There were 12 deaths here last year: 1 Act coolie, 4 adult non-Act labourers, and 7 children. All the adults were old residents on the garden, the majority being dependents who had arrived with former batches of coolies in a very old and decrepit state.

"The causes of death are put down under two chief headings, diarrhœa and dysentery 8, and fever 4.

"The former fact drew my attention to the water-supply, and on enquiry I found that the majority of the coolies lived last year on the banks of a stream (Demo), and that all the deaths occurred among those living there. There was a well provided for them; but I have very little doubt that only a few used it. Before my inspection these lines had all been knocked down, and the coolies removed to fresh ones, built in one corner of a level plain and at some distance from the river. Here two tube wells have been provided. Without in any way recognizing the sanitary precaution contained in the move, the manager has unconsciously adopted the very step I should have advocated, *viz.*, the removal of the coolies to a site away from the banks of the river.

"The new lines are on a good site, and in very good condition. There was scarcely any sickness on the date of my inspection, and all the coolies looked very healthy. The native medical man in charge of the coolies is a qualified practitioner.

"This garden has, as a rule, had a very low annual death-rate.

"Regarding the still-prevailing high death-rate among the Public Works Department coolies of Dibrugarh and Sadiya, I have little to add or take away from what I wrote when reporting on their condition last year.

Public Works Department coolies of Dibrugarh and Sadiya.

"I there attributed the causes of the mortality to be due—

(1) To the fact of their being North-West coolies, a type of labourer, which has, by experience dearly bought, been repeatedly found to be unsuited to the climate of Upper Assam.

(2) To the want of care shown in the selection of individual coolies. Many who were recruited were physically unfit for hard labour, or belonged to a class to whom in their own country the idea of working for wages would have been the last which would have entered their minds as a means of procuring subsistence.

(3) The nature of the work assigned to them. During the cold weather and early part of the rains, they are drafted in batches to the different sub-divisions of the district or its frontier where their work may for that time lie. Accommodation of a most rudimentary description is provided for them at these camps, their water-supply is from the nearest

nullahs or tanks, and they are unable to supplement the supply of food doled out to them by any purchases of their own.

(4) The indifferent sanitary arrangements provided for them at head-quarters.

"These lines are as a rule in bad repair and on low damp sites. In many huts no sleeping accommodation is provided. For one portion of their lines, that near the District Engineer's office, there is a well, the coolies located elsewhere drink from wells of their own construction, or from one of the numerous foul tanks in the neighbourhood.

"I notice one fact in connection with the returns; the deaths of children have not been reported. From what I have stated, it will not be a matter of surprise to find that the majority of the deaths of last year were due to bowel-disorders.

Diarrhœa	14
Dysentery	13
Cholera	3
Fevers	6
Accidents	2
Other causes	6
Total	44

"20 out of this total died between June and September."

CHAPTER IX.—Births.

Decrease in birth-rate.

While the death-rate has risen from 41·3 to 43·2 per mille, the birth-rate has fallen from 39·1 per mille in 1882, and 34·3 in 1883, to 32·2. The statement below compares the provincial statistics of births and deaths for the past eight years, from which it will be seen that in the past three years the death-rate has been gradually rising and the birth-rate falling.

Year.	Births.	Deaths.	Birth-rate per mille.	Death-rate per mille.
1884	8,629	11,583	32·2	43·2
1883	7,887	9,535	34·3	41·3
1882	7,824	7,590	39·1	37·8
1881	7,122	6,171	36·6	31·7
1880	5,904	6,657	31·3	35·2
1879	4,996	6,450	27·	50·9
1878	5,506	11,421	31·9	66·1
1877	4,950	7,465	33·8	50·9

The following statement gives the figures for each district separately, with the proportion borne by the births to the mean strength of the district labour force.

District.	Annual strength.		Number of births.		Birth-rate per mille.	
	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.	1883.	1884.
Sylhet	33,443	43,209	1,421	1,522	42·5	35·2
Cachar	71,575	79,268	2,945	3,039	41·1	38·3
Lakhimpur	40,562	45,066	1,011	1,182	24·9	26·2
Sibságar	54,081	62,993	1,826	1,924	33·8	30·5
Nowgong	8,249	11,316	164	263	19·9	23·2
Darrang	19,978	23,458	464	596	23·2	25·4
Kámrup	1,977	2,542	56	103	28·3	40·5
Total	229,867	267,855	7,887	8,629	34·3	32·2

The same figures are given again in the table below, where they are compared with the corresponding death statistics.

District.	Number of deaths.	Number of births.	Death-rate.		Birth-rate.	
			Order of demerit.	Rate per mille.	Order of demerit.	Rate per mille.
Sylhet	1,845	1,522	6	42·7	5	35·2
Cachar	2,660	3,039	7	33·6	6	38·3
Lakhimpur	1,939	1,182	5	42·9	3	26·2
Sibságar	3,090	1,924	4	48·9	4	30·5
Nowgong	690	263	2	61·0	1	23·2
Darrang	1,185	596	3	50·5	2	25·4
Kámrúp	174	103	1	69·6	7	40·5
Total	11,583	8,629	.....	43·2	.....	32·2

The above list shows that Cachar is again the only district in which the births exceed the deaths. Nowgong, with the highest death-rate next to the small district of Kámrúp, has also the lowest birth-rate. Darrang comes next to Nowgong in both lists of demerit, and Sibságar takes fourth place in each. These figures, confirming as they

do the general tendency spoken of in last year's report, would seem to imply a close connection between a high death-rate and a low birth-rate.

Birth-rate according to nationality.

2. The following table distributes the births among the different nationalities, and strikes the ratio on the number of women.

District.	Bengal.			North-Western Provinces.			Chota Nagpur.			Nepal.		
	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.
Sylhet	4,030	313	77·6	6,068	837	137·9	2,859	350	122·4	18	...	...
Cachar	8,068	1,138	141·0	5,652	970	171·6	6,809	912	133·9	24	3	125·0
Lakhimpur	2,291	101	44·0	747	26	34·8	9,532	1,037	108·7	5	3	600·0
Sibságar	4,752	380	79·9	2,713	304	112·0	10,181	1,213	119·1	4	...	...
Nowgong	930	39	41·9	105	10	95·2	1,839	184	100·0	1	...	...
Darrang	2,288	94	41·0	809	48	59·3	3,493	391	111·9	4	1	250·0
Kámrúp	411	45	109·4	5	1	200·0	297	42	141·4	14	...	...
Total of 1884	22,770	2,110	92·6	16,099	2,196	136·4	35,010	4,129	117·0	70	7	96·6
Total of 1883	20,254	2,116	104·5	13,911	2,002	143·9	30,289	3,642	120·2	53	7	132·1

District.	Madras.			Bombay.			Assam.			Total.		
	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.
Sylhet	237	21	88·6	5	...	...	9	1	111·1	13,230	1,522	115·0
Cachar	137	8	58·4	134	7	52·2	21	1	47·6	20,850	3,039	145·7
Lakhimpur	39	7	179·4	.....	...	...	130	8	61·5	12,747	1,182	92·7
Sibságar	37	4	108·1	13	...	...	404	23	56·9	18,108	1,924	106·2
Nowgong	46	1	21·7	.....	...	...	332	29	87·3	3,254	263	80·8
Darrang	30	4	133·3	.....	...	...	633	58	91·6	7,261	596	82·1
Kámrúp	.....	...	...	.....	...	...	48	15	312·5	777	103	132·9
Total of 1884	527	45	85·3	153	7	45·7	1,577	135	85·6	76,226	8,629	113·2
Total of 1883	456	35	76·8	94	9	95·7	1,021	76	74·4	66,081	7,887	119·4

There is a falling off in the ratio in the case of each of the three great recruiting countries, but they maintain the same order, the proportion being greatest in the case of North-West coolies and least in the case of Bengalis. The greatest falling off is in the case of North-West coolies.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, the officiating Chief Commissioner can only repeat what was said by his predecessor last year, and express his extreme regret that the terrible death-rate among labourers on the gardens of this province, as well as among immigrants *en route* to the Surma Valley, shows as yet no signs of decrease; he trusts, however, that the measures adopted during the year 1884 in the way of closing unhealthy gardens and appointing committees to sit upon them, and also the more frequent inspections that have been made of late by inspecting officers, will not fail to improve matters in the present

year, as regards the mortality on gardens. In regard to the mortality *en route* to the Surma Valley, Mr. Ward can suggest no other practical remedy than his scheme of an accelerated daily steamer service between Narainganj and Cachar, which will form the subject of a separate report to the Government of India, and which he trusts will receive their cordial support.

By order of the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

E. STACK,

Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

SHILLONG:

The 18th January 1886.

RETURNS.

Return showing the Statistics of the Labour Force

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Classes of labourers.	Number remaining at the end of year 1883.	Additions made during the year 1884. Imported. By contractors.	By garden-sardar	Free labourers and dependents imported direct.	Otherwise than by importation. Number giving contract under Section 111.	Number giving contract under Section 112.	Received from other gardens.	Recovered after having been struck off as deserters.	Remaining after expiry of contracts.	Otherwise obtained.	Births.	By transfer to adults from minors.	Total added	Total of columns 2 and 14.
Sylhet — Act-I labourers (adults)	6,851	1,673	1,539	....	1,712	26	380	55	....	....	....	....	5,885	12 236
Sylhet — Non-Act labourers — Adults	17,978	....	....	3,355	....	....	2,936	....	1,596	4,048	....	387	12,322	30,300
Sylhet — Non-Act labourers — Children	11,285	....	....	2,845	....	....	999	....	....	1,307	1,522	18	6,691	17,976
Sylhet — Total	36,114	1 673	1,539	6,200	1,712	26	4,315	55	1,596	5,355	1 5.2	405	24,398	60,512
Cachar — Act-I. labourers (adults)	13,517	1,021	3,426	....	7,206	68	217	110	....	....	....	....	12,048	25,565
Cachar — Non-Act labourers — Adults	29,421	....	....	1 779	....	....	285	....	5,915	6,234	....	861	15,077	44,498
Cachar — Non-Act labourers — Children	30,797	....	....	2,430	....	....	56	....	789	1,722	3,039	....	8,036	38,833
Cachar — Total	73,735	1,021	3,426	4,209	7,206	68	558	110	6,704	7,956	3,039	864	35,161	108,896
Surmá Valley — Act I. labourers (adults)	20 368	2 694	4,965	....	8,918	94	597	165	....	...	....	....	17,433	37,801
Surmá Valley — Non-Act labourers — Adults	47,399	....	....	5,131	....	....	3,221	....	7,511	10,282	....	1,251	27,999	74,798
Surmá Valley — Non-Act labourers — Children	42,082	....	....	5,275	....	....	1,055	....	789	3,029	4,561	18	14,727	56,809
Surmá Valley — Total	109,849	2,694	4 965	10,409	8,918	94	4,873	165	8,300	13,311	4,561	1,269	59,559	169,408
Kamrúp — Act-I. labourers (adults)	468	37	167	....	88	46	32	...	...	....	....	....	370	838
Kamrúp — Non Act labourers — Adults	892	....	....	57	....	....	181	....	234	392	....	20	884	1,776
Kamrúp — Non Act labourers — Children	654	....	....	146	....	....	98	....	....	80	103	8	435	1,089
Kamrúp — Total	2,014	37	167	203	88	46	311	....	234	472	103	28	1,689	3,703
Darrang — Act-I. labourers (adults)	6,535	1,001	2,003	....	3,199	421	363	32	....	....	....	....	7 019	13,554
Darrang — Non Act labourers — Adults	8,556	....	....	443	....	....	378	....	2,582	3,583	....	169	7,135	15 691
Darrang — Non Act labourers — Children	5,341	....	....	1,177	....	....	172	....	148	486	596	....	2,579	7,920
Darrang — Total	20,432	1,001	2,003	1,620	3,199	421	913	32	2,710	4,069	596	169	16,733	37,165
Nowgong — Act-I. labourers (adults)	2,185	497	814	....	33	4	240	20	....	....	....	....	1,608	3 793
Nowgong — Non-Act labourers — Adults	4,704	....	....	579	....	....	117	....	743	1,431	....	87	2,957	7 661
Nowgong — Non-Act labourers — Children	2,807	....	....	785	....	....	68	....	11	201	263	73	1,401	4,208
Nowgong — Total	9,696	497	814	1,364	33	4	425	20	754	1,632	263	160	5,966	15,662
Sibsagar — Act I. labourers (adults)	21,903	1,531	5,293	....	9,636	....	576	92	....	....	....	....	17,128	39,121
Sibsagar — Non-Act labourers — Adults	16,456	...	....	349	....	....	606	....	3,591	2,657	....	354	7,607	24,062
Sibsagar — Non-Act labourers — Children	18,181	....	....	3,265	....	....	372	....	173	1,402	1,924	....	7,136	25,287
Sibsagar — Total	56 579	1,531	5,293	3,614	9,636	....	1,604	92	3,764	4,059	1,924	354	31,871	88,450
Lakhimpur — Act-I. labourers (adults)	15,713	3,520	3,060	....	1 193	559	1,019	77	....	....	....	....	9 428	25,141
Lakhimpur — Non-Act labourers — Adults	13,721	....	....	603	....	....	458	....	4,512	2,450	....	181	8 204	21 925
Lakhimpur — Non-Act labourers — Children	11,269	....	....	2,116	....	....	163	....	356	629	1,182	511	4,957	16,226
Lakhimpur — Total	40,703	3,520	3,060	2,719	1,193	559	1,640	77	4,868	3,079	1,182	692	22,589	63,292
Brahmaputra Valley — Act-I. labourers (adults)	46,894	6,586	11,337	....	14,149	1,030	2,230	221	....	....	....	....	35 553	82,447
Brahmaputra Valley — Non-Act labourers — Adults	44,328	....	....	2,031	....	....	1,790	....	11,642	10 613	....	811	26 787	71,115
Brahmaputra Valley — Non-Act labourers — Children	38,202	....	....	7,489	....	....	873	....	688	2 798	4,068	592	16,508	54,710
Brahmaputra Valley — Total	129,424	6,586	11 337	9,520	14,149	1,030	4,893	221	12,330	13 311	4,068	1,403	78,848	208,272
Total for the Province — Act-I. labourers (adults)	67,262	9,280	16,302	....	23,067	1,124	2 827	386	....	. .	....	....	52 986	120,248
Total for the Province — Non-Act labourers — Adults	91,727	....	....	7,165	....	....	5,011	...	19,153	20,795	..	2,062	54,186	145,913
Total for the Province — Non-Act labourers — Children	80,284	....	....	12,764	....	....	1,928	....	1,477	5,827	8,629	610	31,235	111,519
Total for the Province — Total	239,273(a)	9,280	16,302	19,929	23,067	1,124	9,766	386	20,630	26,622	8,629	2,672	138,407	377,680

(a) The difference of 1869 between this entry and the corresponding entry in column 28 of the statement at the end of the report for 1883 is due to additions made in consequence of some of the planters, who omitted to submit returns for 1883, having submitted the same for 1884. The increase is distributed as follows.—

	Act adults.	Non-Act adults.	Children.	Total.
Sylhet	37	..	..	37
Cachar	26	116	25	167
Kamrup	..	84	9[illegible]	1[illegible]
Darrang	.	308	14[illegible]	50[illegible]
Nowgong	.	736	247	983
Total	63	1,304	302	1,669

of the Tea-gardens in the Province of Assam during the year 1884.

16	17	18		19		20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		32
Deductions made during the year 1884.																	Annual strength		
		Deaths.		Desertions.															
Transferred to other gardens	Left the garden with permission.	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	By transfer from minors to adults.	Number giving agreements under Section 111.	Number giving agreements under Section 112.	Cancelment under Sections 111, 149, or 177.	Cancelment for permanent unfitness under Section 122.	Efflux of time, Section 141.	Redemption, Section 142.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.	Total deducted.	Number remaining at the end of year 1884.	Strength on 1st July 1884.	First half.	Second half.	Death-rate per mille.
247	....	261	314	677	594	....	....	....	12	15	1,743	29	..	3,892	8,344	9,205	8,028	8,774	68·2
1,075	3,651	277	347	833	770	....	1,209	8	....	....	....	....	..	8,173	22,127	21,848	19,913	21,987	29·7
403	902	344	302	179	205	405	....	....	....	....	....	....	..	2,740	15,236	14,455	12,870	14,845	47·0
1,725	4,556	882	963	1,689	1,569	405	1,209	8	12	15	1,743	29	..	14,805	45,707	45,508	40,811	45,607	42·7
217	....	384	355	486	474	....	....	....	24	15	5,668	11	..	7,634	17,931	18,119	15,818	18,025	43·9
285	7,509	448	381	784	696	.. .	5,332	41	....	....	....	....	..	15,426	29,072	29,872	29,646	29,472	28·0
56	2,302	598	494	146	239	864	....	....	....	....	....	....	..	4,699	34,134	33,110	31,958	33,622	33·4
558	9,811	1,430	1,230	1,366	1,409	864	5,332	41	24	15	5,668	11	..	27,759	81,137	81,101	77,418	81,119	33·6
464	....	645	669	1,163	1,068	...	....	....	36	30	7,411	40	..	11,526	26,275	27,324	23,846	26,799	52·0
1,360	11,163	725	728	1,567	1,466	....	6,541	49	....	....	....	....	..	23,590	51,199	51,720	49,559	51,459	28·7
459	3,204	942	796	325	444	1,269	....	....	....	....	....	....	..	7,439	49,370	47,565	44,823	48,467	37·4
2,283	14,367	2,312	2,193	3,055	2,978	1,269	6,541	49	36	30	7,411	40	..	42,564	126,844	126,609	118,229	126,726	36·8
13	....	23	19	20	32	....	....	....	....	1	198	2	..	308	530	661	564	595	72·7
12	329	28	29	46	19	....	2	5	....	....	....	....	..	470	1,306	1,201	1,046	1,253	49·9
10	87	52	23	3	3	28	....	....	....	....	....	....	..	206	883	856	735	869	93·3
35	416	103	71	69	54	28	2	5	....	1	198	2	..	984	2,719	2,718	2,366	2,718	69·6
363	....	204	290	157	126	....	....	....	....	17	2,817	....	..	4,034	9,520	9,541	7,938	9,430	64·0
378	3,777	144	163	231	143	..	2,076	405	....	....	....	....	..	7,317	8,374	8,968	8,761	8,670	35·2
172	946	176	148	35	24	169	....	....	....	....	....	....	..	1,670	6,250	6,322	5,831	6,256	53·7
913	4,723	584	601	423	293	169	2,076	405	....	17	2,817	....	..	13,021	24,144	24,629	22,530	24,356	50·5
240	....	119	174	95	82	....	....	....	....	107	449	....	4	1,300	2,499	2,838	2,511	2,665	124·6
114	1,517	99	97	94	125	....	31	4	....	....	....	....	..	2,081	5,589	5,784	5,234	5,672	36·0
89	331	96	75	29	63	160	....	....	....	....	....	....	..	843	3,365	3,464	3,135	3,414	52·5
443	1,848	344	346	218	270	160	31	4	....	107	449	....	4	4,224	11,453	12,086	10,881	11,752	61·0
576	....	615	768	342	403	....	...	....	2	88	8,314	1	..	11,119	28,002	28,474	25,233	28,238	51·9
656	3,070	269	339	208	192	....	4,883	....	....	....	....	....	..	9,517	14,545	15,711	16,083	15,128	32·5
372	1,420	551	638	77	89	354	....	....	....	....	....	....	..	3,501	21,766	21,357	19,744	21,561	57·4
1,604	4,490	1,445	1,645	637	684	354	4,883	....	2	88	8,314	1	..	24,137	64,313	65,642	61,060	64,927	48·9
1,019	....	563	566	388	312	....	....	....	1	113	5,368	5	..	8,335	16,806	17,390	16,551	17,098	67·1
458	2,374	146	192	144	203	..	623	534	....	....	....	....	..	5,724	16,201	15,945	14,833	16,073	21·7
163	1,155	189	283	16	71	692	43	....	....	....	....	....	..	2,612	13,614	13,137	12,203	13,375	36·6
1,640	4,529	898	1,041	548	636	692	666	534	1	113	5,368	5	..	16,671	46,621	46,472	43,587	46,546	42·9
2,211	....	1,624	1,817	1,002	955	....	....	....	3	326	17,146	8	4	25,096	57,351	58,704	52,799	58,027	62·0
1,618	12,067	646	720	723	732	....	7,615	948	....	....	....	....	..	25,109	46,006	47,587	4[illegible]	46,786	30·0
806	3,939	1,064	1,167	160	250	1,403	43	....	....	....	....	....	..	8,832	45,878	45,136	41,669	45,607	51·1
4,635	16,006	3,374	3,704	1,885	1,937	1,403	7,658	948	3	326	17,146	8	4	59,037	149,235	151,427	140,425	150,381	48·6
2,675	....	2,269	2,486	2,165	2,023	....	....	....	39	356	24,557	48	4	36,622	83,626	86,028	76,645	84,827	58·9
2,978	23,320	1,411	1,448	2,290	2,198	....	14,156	997	....	....	....	....	..	48,708	97,205	99,307	95,517	98,2[illegible]6	29·5
1,265	7,143	2,006	1,963	485	694	2,672	43	....	....	....	....	....	..	16,271	95,248	92,701	86,492	93,974	44·0
6,918	30,373	5,686	5,897	4,940	4,915	2,672	14,199	997	39	356	24,557	48	4	101,601	276,079	278,036	258,654	277,057	43·2